

**STUDIES IN MODERN INDIAN HISTORY**

**CHAURI CHAURA VIOLENCE**

**SUSPENSION OF MOVEMENT**

*Author*

**DR. M.N. SHARMA**



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*Suspension of Movement*

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# Preface

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The Theme has been weaved into eight chapters including a glossary and relevant appendices.

The eight chapters deal with various phases of Gandhiji's philosophy of life which had made the pathway to Swaraj. He showed his way in a bold way and did not hesitate to take any step which may challenge his technique of satyagrah.

I have collected the material from various research centres, viz. Sapru House Library, Sahitya Akademic Library, Delhi University Library, IHR Library, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, Jamia Millia Islamic and other institutions of higher learning. I feel beholden to the members of these institutions whose academic support have been of much help to me.





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## CHAPTER : 1

# Historical Background

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The foundation the Indian National Congress in 1885 was an unprecedented historic event in the annals of India. It afforded much impetus to the commencement of political activities by well-educated middle class intelligentsia engaged in various kinds of professions in different parts of the country. The unique feature of this organization was an annual meeting for a few days in a big city on a common platform where the members of this organization could pass resolutions having constitutional stance. The demands were modest in their nature and the tone was moderate which lacked the agitation approach.

The initiative in this direction was taken in 1885 by an eminent member of the civil service who served in various capacities in India. He was Allan Octavian Hume, a Scot by birth and a democrat by aptitude, temperament and training and a retired senior official from the Board of Revenue of the North-West Provinces. Greatly loved, respected and admired by Congressmen and his well-wishers, Hume found out a political and constitutional channel which was the result of the spread of a new model of western education imparted to a tiny fraction of Indian population which had become very keen and enthusiastic in giving a new interpretation to the existing political system in India.<sup>1</sup> He initiated a debate to the fact that the *Pax Britannica* had failed to bring out a solution to the economic ills afflicting the India soil; the machinery of the government was out of touch with the masses and there could be no hope for the safety of the people unless the administration was leavened by a representative Indian element.<sup>2</sup>

Another Briton, Lord Dufferin, the Viceroy of India, undoubtedly evinced much interest in what Hume had originally planned.<sup>3</sup> He found no difficulty in according his approval to Hume's political innovation as he considered that under the prevailing circumstance this kind of approach at all-India level

would definitely furnish the machinery of the government with something like an authoritarian statement of the views, aspirations, demands and wishes of the educated and intelligent classes throughout the country.<sup>4</sup> He felt quite sure that the very existence of an all-India organization through which the British government in India might be kept informed of its opinion would greatly benefit the public as a whole. He indeed considered such an organization vested with a high degree of responsibility as useful in the existing setup.

It is quite evident that the foundation of the Indian National Congress with the cooperation of Indian stalwarts and sympathies of liberal British administrators embodied the wishes and aspirations of a new India which was growing into political consciousness under the impact of various forces, such as the development of English education, newspaper press, swift means of communications with the progress of science and technology, internal and external security under as strong and well-organized central administration, racial discrimination, economic exploitation of the weaker sections of society, growing rate of unemployment, increasing number of famines and the unprecedented havoc wrought by them on human beings and cattle and ineffective and defective famine-eradication policy, various political associations, social-religious reform movements, publication of new literature and its easy availability amongst the younger generation dwelling in towns and cities, and, last but not the least, the growing political consciousness of the past greatness of India.<sup>5</sup> In 1886, Dadabhai Naroji, a prominent Congress leader, president of the second annual session of the Indian National Congress and a formidable speaker and an orator with resonant voice and an expert on economic drain explained thus;.... A National Congress must confine itself to questions in which the entire nation had a direct participation.<sup>6</sup>

The organization, its working and participation in it by well-educated and well known members of Indian society marked the advent of a new kind model in the political awakening of the people of India. It indeed provided a common platform and a national forum for opening of a free and frank dialogue on crucial national issues which greatly helped in the formation of public opinion of middle class intelligentsia and also the evolution of the process of political education which greatly

prompted the masses of India to take to non-violent agitational approach on the eve of the emergence of Mahatma Gandhi on the Indian scene in 1915. Henceforth the national upsurge spontaneously released by the leadership of the Indian National Congress and the British measures to meet the new political challenges from time to time constituted the twin major instruments of the history of India.

It is obvious that in the eventful history of the Indian National Congress, the first one-and-a-half decade may be termed as era of limited constitutional demands. Undoubtedly the early leaders of the Congress had great faith in British style of functioning in India and they, therefore, instead of adopting any means which could have anti-*Raj* stance, had a different kind of approach to redress their grievances. And these measures were tinged with peaceful and constitutional atmosphere through resolutions, petitions and appeals. This kind of political programme was conducted in a decorous, sober and subdued spirit.<sup>7</sup> The Congress leadership was full of admiration—almost adulation—for British history and culture. They gratefully acknowledged numerous advantages derived by their country from the British connection. The acceptance of the British rule by them in a frank, open and loyal manner was a glaring phenomenon because they were well-convinced to the fact that, 'British rule alone could secure to the country the peace and order which were necessary of slowly evolving a nation out of the heterogeneous elements of which it was composed, and assuring to it a ready advance in different directions.'<sup>8</sup>

It may, however, be seen in this context that the speeches delivered by eminent Congress leaders and the resolutions finally adopted at such annual sessions did not contain the element of revolutionary fervour or anti-*Raj* feelings. In fact almost all the presidential addresses recounted the various kinds of benefits accrued from the British rule in India and the Congress leadership gave assurances of India's loyalty to the Crown and also reiterated India's desire to remain within the British Empire.<sup>9</sup> It is also evident that these annual sessions attracted the attention of the educated class mostly from towns and big cities and also of the government though for different purposes. The proceedings in the sessions did not include

discussion or debate by the members, but a number of resolutions were passed by acclamation and were usually carried forward with additional from year to year. But with all this kind of programme, the Congress had one serious limitation by which it was greatly handicapped in its political programme. It functioned as an organized political body only for three days in the whole year and its vibrations were confined to the urban educated middle class. It is also evident that its confinement of the big cities kept it aloof from the masses of India and its stance led and propagated by an exclusive body of English educated people smacked of the desire and effort to assimilate western political institutions.

During the first phase, the Indian National Congress had a different type of political programme. It urged the British government in India to introduce a number of reforms like the reorganization of the councils, simultaneous examinations for the Indian Civil Service and the raising of age of candidates appearing in it, the abolition or Reconstitution of India Council; the separation of judiciary from executive; the repeal of the Arms Act; the enlistment of Indians as volunteers; the appointment of Indians to the commissioned ranks; the reduction of military expenditure and the extension of the permanent settlement of other parts of India. Besides, it expressed its opinion on all the important measures of the government and protested against the unpopular ones.

With the passage of time, it was felt that the political ideas, ideology and activities of the leadership of the Indian National Congress should have some kind of recognition in England, especially amongst the British politicians who had sentiments of sympathy towards the growing patriotic aspirations of Indians. Undoubtedly, a number of distinguished parliamentarians and eminent public men like Drake, Bright, Bradlaugh and Fawcett and voiced Indian grievances from time-to-time, but no systematic political work had been undertaken so far. It was Dadabhai Naoroji who initiated this kind of propaganda in England and, in this task, he was greatly supported by no less persons than A.O. Hume and William Wedderburn who were determined to apprise the British public of the wrongs done to a subject-nation like India. In 1887, Naoroji volunteered himself to act as an agent to the

Congress in England and there he did what 'his own industry and limited resources rendered possible.'<sup>10</sup> As a consequence of these incessant efforts the birth of the British Committee to undertake the political work in England was the most significant phenomenon at the fifth session the Congress held in Bombay in 1889. Its members were William Wedderburn, W.S. Caine, Bright Maclaren, J.E. Ellis, Dadabhai Naoroji and Gorge Yule. They were to guide and direct the operations of the National Congress Agency in England and control the expenditure. Besides, in the same session prominent persons like A.O. Hume, Gorge Yule, William Alan, Eardley Norton, J.N. Heward, Pherozeshah Mehta, Surendranath Banerjea, Mono Mohan Ghose, Sharafuddin, R.N. Mudholkar and W.C. Bonnerjee were appointed to represent the Indian National Congress in England to push up its work thereby pressing upon the consideration of the British public, the political reforms it advocated.<sup>11</sup>

A new phenomenon is glaring on the political scene of India when the Congress executive sent to England in 1890 a delegation consisting of prominent Congressmen like A.O. Hume Surendranath Banerjea, R.N. Mudholkar, and E. Norton to tour the country and appeal to the British public, on behalf of the people of India, to support the Indian National Congress in its demand for reform in Indian administration. On account of their efforts and persuasion, a kind of relationship was established with the associations and organizations of both the political parties in Britain. Thus effective propaganda could be made there in numerous meetings which were well-attended. Consequently, resolutions were adopted at these meetings in favour of reforms, particularly for a system of representative government and a few petitions were sent to the House of Commons praying for the acceptance of the Congress scheme for constitutional reforms.<sup>12</sup>

This kind of political approach was taken at the subsequent annual session of the Congress. The Indian Councils Act passed in 1892 was not in accordance with the demands made by the Indian leaders from time. Looking to the vastness of British India and the multitude of its population, the raising of the number of additional members from twelve to sixteen in the central legislature and from one hundred twenty-five to four hundred in the provincial councils were more quantitative

changes which had no qualitative impact for the better.<sup>13</sup> In accordance with this decision, majority of the members were nominated by the Viceroy and the Governors for their respective councils from among the non-officials, so that the official majority could be preserved without any kind of hindrance. However, the functions of the councils were enlarged by giving to the members the right of asking questions and discussing the financial allocations in the budget, but not voting upon it. It is evident that the change in connection with the composition and powers of the legislative councils was just nominal. The Act, therefore, fell far short of Indian expectations. It contained the seeds of communal representative and it was, therefore disappointing in spirit and content. Naturally, the Indian public opinion as represented by the Congress was dissatisfied with the denial of the principle of election, the limited scope for discussion of the budget and interpolations and the subtle attempt to introduce class consciousness to break the Congress with it.

The Act could not escape the fury and criticism of the Congress leadership. Dadabhai Naoroji levelled trenchant criticism against its clauses and bemoaned the poor character of the extent of concessions made to discuss finances and scope to put questions. He realised the fact that to all intents and purposes, India was being administered under an arbitrary rule.<sup>14</sup> Besides, others focussed the attention of the people regarding the major defects of the Act and the administrative lapses in the functioning of the government. Newspapers—both in English and Indian languages—propagated the view-point of the nationalist leaders. Besides, in various political conferences held from time, the prominent leaders did not flag behind in affording a constitutional colour to the existing agitational approach and they also apprised the people of the dismal concessions granted by the Act of 1892.

In the next decade, the successive Governor-Generals were conservative in their attitude and hence the solution to the constitutional problems appeared to be a remote possibility. Instead of finding out any agreeable and refreshing approach, they clung to the traditional measure and routine affairs without any kind of change in them, and this mode of administration brought good to neither side and created fresh and more baffling



problems. Indecision in numerous matters was a glaring phenomenon. Other factors which hampered the decisive and prompt action were the inadequate support from the Home Government, opposition of the bureaucracy at various levels, and the non-cooperative attitude of the British community in India. For sometime Lord Lansdowne sought to keep alive the responsive mood, but he soon shrank back at the first obstacle and decided to deal sternly with the vocal educated classes.<sup>15</sup> His attitude was quite apparent at a farewell dinner in Calcutta where he uttered a somewhat derogatory remark about the Indian National Congress by calling it a microscopic minority. By showing this kind of attitude he set tone for this successors to repeat it with greater vehemence. He, however, did not fail to realize the growing demand for constitutional reforms advocated by the Indian intelligentsia and sent home the confidential instructions for liberalising the legislative councils.<sup>16</sup>

Lord Elgin II abstained from giving any kind of expression to his views on the current constitutional problems of India. During his Viceroyalty, he was advised, guided and directed by the Secretary of State and also by the advice of the members of the Executive Council. The Indian press representing the nationalist views always levelled criticism against him for his disregard of the wishes and sentiments of the governed.<sup>17</sup> He was often critical of the genuine Indian demands and tried to evade the real issue which he never bothered to resolve during his time. At the close of his career in India, he uttered something indiscreetly about India in the United Services Club of Simla. 'India was conquered by the sword and by the sword it shall be held'.<sup>18</sup>

These views and sentiments expressed by the successive Viceroys did not hamper the work of the Congress party. It rather maintained its constitutional approach and showed more dignified reaction than the British nation is with long democratic traditions. In a limited way, however, individual reaction of Bal Gangadhar Tilak was noticed in Maharashtra between 1893-97 for which he was imprisoned on a charge of sedition in 1897.<sup>19</sup> But the true implications of the clubs, *akharas*, societies and religious festivals started by him in a few areas of Western India were not fully understood by the rest of India at that time.

With the assumption of the office of the Viceroy and Governor-General of India in 1899, the young Lord Curzon who was hardly forty years old, the aspirations, feelings and attitudes in the nationalist circles began to change. The Secretary of State, Francis Hamilton, cautioned Curzon and warned him of the political situation in India. He stated, 'I think the real danger to our rule in India, not now but 50 years hence, is this gradual adoption and extension of western ideas of agitation and organisation, and if we could break the educated Hindu party into two sections holding widely different views, we should by such a division, strengthen our position against the subtle and continuous attack which the spread of education must make upon our present system of government'.<sup>20</sup>

Soon the new Viceroy had firm grip over the whole administrative machinery by devising new measures in which he showed a comprehensive thoroughness. He formed a poor opinion about Indians regarding their loyalty and competence in various spheres of administrative work. He did not favour, rather opposed, in due course of time, in granting any kind of constitutional or other concession to Indians. This kind of feeling made the educated Indians believe that nothing useful was going to be granted to them in the next few years. Indeed, it greatly wounded the sentiments of the people and enraged them. Hence his reactionary policies and measures such as officialisation of the Calcutta Corporation, greater control over the universities, colleges and other educational institutions. And, last but not the least, the Partition of Bengal had greatly agitated the more sensitive and self-conscious sections of Indians during the opening years of the twentieth century.

It is evident from the functioning of the Viceroy that he disliked Congress and attached little importance to it. He held the opinion that the Congress posed a danger to the British rule in India and it contained seeds of future resolution. The Congress claim of being a representative body was always refuted by the Viceroy with trenchant criticism often levelled against it. He even went to the length of giving vent to the feelings in writing of Francis Hamilton whom he informed that the Congress was tottering to its fall and one of his greatest ambitions while in India was to assist it to a peaceful demise. He considered the Indian people unequal to the responsibilities

of high office and never had reliance on them. Thus there was fashioned in the Viceroy's mind the image of India and Indians very different from that which was being built up in the minds of the apostles of the new nationalism. To make the British rule stronger, he tightened the grip of administration over the whole country. He was of the firm opinion that, 'More places on this or that council for a few active or eloquent men will not benefit the raiyat.... That I have not offered political concessions is because I did not regard it as wisdom or statesmanship in the interests of India to do so'.<sup>21</sup>

Of all the administrative measures undertaken during the Viceroyalty of Curzon, the Partition of Bengal announced on 20 July 1905 was forced upon the people against their will. It was indeed a most high-handed action of the viceroy. This brought about much odium and criticism against him which led to his unpopularity and also alienated a great section of the educated classes from British rule. Besides, there was much agitation, criticism and unprecedented dissatisfaction amongst the people of Bengal who formed a joint-front against this decision.

The agitation did not end here. It was taken up as a national issue at the twenty-first session of the Indian National Congress held at Benares on 27-30 December 1905. Its president, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, criticised this measure in the following words, 'The tremendous upheaval of popular feeling which has taken place in Bengal constitutes a landmark in the history of our national progress.... A wave of true national consciousness has swept over the Province... This most outstanding fact of the situation is that the public life of this country has received an accession of strength of great importance, and for this all-India owes a deep debt of gratitude to Bengal'.<sup>22</sup> Another prominent Congress leader present in the same session was very critical of the Partition of Bengal. He stated, 'Lord Curzon has divided our province; he sought to bring about the disintegration of our race, and to destroy the solidarity of our popular opinion'.<sup>23</sup>

As a result of this resentment, the Indian National Congress passed a resolution against it and at the same time severely criticised Curzon's action. Indeed, the young and the old levelled words of criticism and condemnation and they manifested disinclination to accept the dismemberment of the homeland as an accomplished fact.<sup>24</sup> Those who had studied

and watched the historic triumphs of Japan, the revolutionary ramblings in Bassi the rise and progress of Sinn Fein movement in Ireland, the Egyptian struggle for freedom and the Young Turk revolt, could not but be filled with new barn ideas and aspirations for their country and prompted more energetic action.

The appointment of the new Lt. Governor of the province brought about the agitation, resentment, anger and criticism as a glaring phenomenon. It is quite evident when Bampfylde Fuller took over as the Lt. Governor of the new province, the fury of the people of Bengal touched new bounds. There were demonstrations everywhere and the day was marked as one of deep mourning and solemn resolve to undo the partition. Batch after batch of bare-footed men marched towards the *ghats* of the Ganges, singing hymns and national songs and shouting *Bande Mataram*. They kept fast for the whole day. So far so a proclamation was read pledging the people to do everything in their power to counteract the evil effects of the dismemberment of the province and to maintain the integrity of the Bengal people. As Stephen E. Koss explained, 'Fuller's injudicious actions added to grievances of this affected area and galvanized the anti-partition agitation that was Lord Curzon's legacy. Money repeated by exhorting Minto to disown Fuller as he was the 'man worst fitted for such a post'. When Fuller resigned, Minto explained to Valentine Chirol of *The Times*, I never was so relieved in my life as when he resigned'.<sup>25</sup>

The anti-partition agitation was greatly highlighted by the nationalist press throughout country. Prominent newspapers and journals like the *Bengalee*, *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, *Kesari*, *New India*, *Sandhya*, *Yugantar* and the *Bande Mataram* played a most remarkable role in giving a new direction and shift to the national mind towards the patriotic sentiments and made the people of India realize about the objectives for the attainment of freedom from the foreign yoke.

Some prominent political leaders of other provinces felt much concerned about the great injustice done to the people of Bengal. The Bombay Presidency and the Central Provinces found in Bal Gangadhar Tilak a determined, sincere and intrepid leader of unusual organising ability. He declared in an unequivocal terms: 'The time has come to demand Swaraj or

self-government. No piece-meal reform will do. The system of present administration is ruinous to the country. It must mend or end'. In the Punjab, the leaders of the prominent social organisation, the Arya Samaj, did not lag behind in preaching the doctrine of *swadeshi* and they went round the country rousing their interest and patronage for the indigenous goods. In the United Provinces, the propaganda for *swadeshi* extended from district to district. In the numerous meetings, people were exhorted to patronise *swadeshi* stores which were opened at numerous places. Thus the *swadeshi* movement gained momentum by the year 1906. The slogan of boycott united virtually all sections of nationalist opinion in Bengal during this period. The *samiti* volunteers were mostly from the student community and the educated young men. Among their elders, the members of the *bhadralok*, professions of law, teaching, journalism and medicine were particularly predominant.<sup>26</sup>

The twin slogans of *swadeshi* and boycott, however, received much attention and recognition at the Calcutta session of the Indian National Congress in 1906 under the presidency of the Grand Old Man, Dadabhai Naoroji. The Congress forthright supported the cause of promotion and growth of the indigenous industries, 'even at some sacrifice'. Thus a movement which had been entirely economic in its nature for sometime suddenly became political and the boycott was added to the *swadeshi*. Obviously, the new gospel spread far and wide and it found its supporters and following in far off areas. As a result of this kind of approach, in Calcutta, a *swadeshi* match-factory; in Dacca, soap-works; and in other towns, cigarettes, biscuits, toys, woollens, etc. were started.<sup>27</sup>

Besides this decade witnessed a phenomenal change in the thinking of the people, and radicalism and extremism emerged in Indian national politics, particularly in Bengal and Maharashtra. A new political programme developed as a result of the ceaseless efforts of Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal and Lala Lajpat Rai whose thundering voices began to rent the sky from corners of India with a new kind of hope and aspirations for amelioration of the condition of the people. This type of political storm was bound to create spot in the ranks of the Indian National Congress which actually was magnified at its Surat session in the year 1907. The split of Surat was the

outcome of a clash of principles as well as of personalities, of mistrust as well as miscalculation. Some persons having no truck with the Congress went to another extreme inculcating a revolutionary cult with violent means. These trends were too alarming to the British administration at various levels to be allowed to prevail.<sup>28</sup>

Lord Minto found the country in the throes of an upheaval. He found much irritation and a sense of frustration amongst the people as a result of certain measures undertaken by his predecessor. His avowed contempt of the educated class and his administrative measures were the main causes of this kind of behaviour of the people of India. Minto was a conservative by instincts and from the very start of his career in India he decided to follow a different line of action. He was very clear in his mind about the principle of the establishment of British supremacy in India at any cost and also to defeat any political movement in the country. He in fact started on a well known note, 'One has always to remember that from the very nature of the conditions surrounding us our existence in India is based on the power of the strong hand.'<sup>29</sup>

During this period, when the Congress was emerging as an important and probably the only political party at all-India level, the prominent leaders like Motilal Nehru did, sometime, evaluated the political situation in the country by launching a severe attack on the existing administrative system of the *Raj*. Such sentiments were expressed by him in his presidential address at the first provincial conference of the United Provinces held at Allahabad in the last week of march 1907.<sup>30</sup> He argued thus: 'The National Congress meets but once a year, and having regard to the fact that it is a vast assembly of representatives from almost every part of India, it cannot conveniently meet more than once in the course of twelve months. Now, gentlemen, as you are aware, John Bull is rather dull of understanding and hard of hearing. The potent voice of the Congress is wanted to his ears across the seas every Christmas-tide. He is aroused and begins to think that there is something wrong somewhere, but before he can fully grasp the situation, the voice, potent as it is, dies away and he hears practically nothing till the following Christmas, when the same thing is repeated with the same result. By saying this I do not by any means intend to imply

that the labours of the Congress have so far been in vain. Those labours have certainly been crowned with a measure of success and that in two directions; first, in the themselves effect of the Congress movement on the Indian themselves, which cannot be too highly valued, and secondly, in securing from the powers that be, atleast a modicum of the reforms advocated by it. I attribute the small measure of success attained in the latter direction solely to the fact that John Bull has not been sufficiently aroused....It is, therefore, necessary for us to supplement that efforts of the Congress of all-India by holding small Congress, so to say, in every Province—nay, if possible, in every town of the Empire—even though it be to reiterate the same demands. But it is clear that besides, what is common to a particular province and the rest of India, there must necessarily be in each province its own special needs that require looking after, its own special grievances that require to be redressed. These it would be impossible to discuss adequately in the Congress of all-India and they must, therefore, be dealt with by the province to which they are peculiar.'

In the same conference, he apprised the people of their rights and privileges which they could claim from the British government. He asked them to fight the battle for their rights in a constitutional way and by doing so they should not fear or retrace their steps by showing any kind of cowardice. But they should act mainly for the achievement of their goal. He elaborated his views thus. 'Now, gentlemen, I do not hold a brief for the Government, nor am I a supporter of the present system, the short comings of which we are here to consider and call attention to. Far be it from me to recommend to you a policy of mean, cringing, fawning flattery of the powers that be. You are men and you must be manly. You have rights and you must stand like men on those rights. You have grievances and you must like men demand redress. Be brave, unbending, persistent in advocating and carrying out reforms. Fear no one, however high he may be placed. Trust in the strength of your cause and support it to the death. Take a mighty resolve that India shall suffer wrong on more and devote all your energies to acquire the strength and the ability to protect the motherland from insult and injury. This strength and ability must come from within, at great sacrifice, and in the fullness

of time. It does not consist in an impotent defiance of constituted authority. A respectful attitude towards the Government of the country is not only not inconsistent with manliness, but is the very essence of the true and healthy manhood of a nation. While on the one hand you have grievances and wrongs that cry loudly for redress, you must not forget that you enjoy, on the other hand many great blessings under the aegis of British rule, not the least of which is the right you are at this moment exercising of assembling in public meeting to criticise that rule it self. In all gratitude we must acknowledge the rights and privileges conferred in the past, and with all the strength, that the justice and righteousness of our cause inspires in us, we must ask for more....I implore you to so conduct you proceedings and to so frame your resolutions as not to compel an administration which has opened with such hope and promise to fight shy of you. Give it the chance to come to the rescue. But if it does not, why go ahead. Move heaven and earth till you get what you fully reserve. If you cannot get it in your life time, do not despair. The noblest legacy that you can possibly leave to your children's children will be the fruition of your patriotic efforts in cause of the motherland. All I beg of you adopt constitutional and not dubtful means, to be brave but not rude, to be dignified but not defiant.'<sup>31</sup>

The most significant achievement of Lord Minto's government was the foundation of the Muslim League by Aga Khan who led a deputation to the Viceroy to apprise him of the political demands of the Muslim community which he stated had separate identity from other communities in India. His efforts bore fruit to the fact that the only hope for Muslims 'lay along the lines of independent political recognition from the British Government as a nation within a nation'.<sup>32</sup> The Muslim League thus received much support and sympathy both from Aga Khan and the Viceroy and soon it chalked out an ambitious political programme by starting a vigorous agitation for separate Muslim electorate on the plea that without their privileges, the Muslim candidates would never be elected to the legislative councils from Hindu majority constituencies.<sup>33</sup>

The Muslim League, in its manifesto, propagated a programme which had main focus on the welfare and development of the Muslim community. Its fundamental objects



were promotion of feelings of loyalty to the British government, protection and advancement of the political rights and interests of the Muslims and prevention of the rise of hostility of the government and of the other Indian communities towards it. Thus the birth of the Muslim League marked a further step in the growth of the sentiment of nationality among the Muslims though in a different and narrow sense.

Having achieved this kind of success by raising a paralled political organisation to the Indian National Congress, the next step for the government was to devise ways and means for weakening the functioning of the Congress. The time of split was a suitable opportunity for the government. And every effort was made to widen the gulf between the two groups of the Congress by placating the moderates and suppressing the radicals who had begun adopting militant means to achieve their end. As a consequence of this policy, Bal Gangadhar Tilak was thrown behind the bars and was deported for six years.

Thereafter, Minto who took the guidelines from Morley outlined fresh constitutional reforms in order to separate the pro-British Congress nationalists from the anti-British elements who posed a serious danger to the British administration in India. The parliamentary enactment known as the Minto-Morley reforms of 1909 was a significant landmark in the constitutional history of our country. The Act contained communal electorate and official majority in the central legislature *sine qua non* of British supremacy in India. It also created a non-official majority in the provincial councils and an Indian element in the executive was introduced as a nominal measure. As regards the procedure of business in the legislature, it was slightly altered to encourage participation in discussions on matters of public interest like budget.

This kind of constitutional model on the part of the British government brought about much interest in the minds of the prominent Indian leaders like Surendranath Banerjea, Pherozeshah Mehta and Gopal Krishna Gokhale. The Congress leadership deputed Gokhale to meet Morley to discuss the Indian situation with him. He felt very sanguine after a number of interviews and discussions with Morley and sent a report thus: 'I can tell you that we never had so true a friend to our aspirations in a responsible position since Ripon's days'. But it

is well known fact that Morley's antagonism to imperialism was too deeply entrenched for him to be able easily to replace it by a belief in empire as a good thing. Writing to Minto, he gave his final verdict on '...the system that you and I had to work. It is a terribly cumbrous and artificial sort of system, and I am not certain that it will last for ever, or even for many years to come'.<sup>34</sup>

The reforms, however, did not fulfill the expectations in their mode of working. It was glaring phenomenon that the non-official majorities in the provinces were illusory, because they were mainly composed of nominated members. In fact, the elected representatives were very few in number i.e. fifteen per cent only.<sup>35</sup> Besides the element of franchise finally decided upon was narrow, limited and uneven. As the system of election was indirect in its content, no sense of responsibility could be expected from members. Besides, the primary voters remained as raw as before and they could not be imparted any kind of political education. Thus it is evident that the 'Minto-Morley reforms had introduced no fundamental alteration in the constitution.... Hence the hopes of the elected members of the Legislative Councils that they would have all the opportunity that they needed of influencing the course of provincial business were not realised'.<sup>39</sup>

The reforms, however, laid main emphasis on separate electorates for special interests, institutions and minorities. This was the worst feature of the reforms as they clearly gave recognition to social and religious differences as the future basis for separate social divergences and create permanent warring elements.<sup>37</sup>

Lord Minto by creating separate electorates for the Muslims and assigning them a larger number of seats than their numerical strength warranted, drew the community away from joint endeavour and halted the growth of a healthy national movement. Lady Minto felt elated that her husband had done a very great thing in weaning the Muslims away—"a work of statesmanship that will affect India and Indian history, for many a long year. It is nothing less than the pulling back of sixty-two millions of people from joining the ranks of seditious opposition."<sup>38</sup>

In his presidential address at the Lahore Congress in 1909 Madam Mohan Malaviya registered a strong protest against all obnoxious features of the Reform Act. He condemned separate electorates for the Muslims and criticised the plural voting permitted to them. 'This is', 'This is', he said, 'protecting the interests of a minority with vengeance and driving the majority to a corner'. He was also critical of the uneven franchise for various classes. 'More objectionable was the disqualifying clause which disallowed a man to contest the election because the Local Government considered him to be of such reputation that his election would be contrary to the public interest. The whole clause left very wide powers into the hands of Local Governments.'<sup>39</sup>

Even Surendranath Banerjea, the prince among the moderates and a warm admirer of British rule and British institutions was constrained to say this about the Minto-Morley reforms. "Nobody in India was under the delusion that they meant very much. Their most important feature was perhaps the power given to non-official members to move resolutions on public questions, thus affording them an opportunity of criticising the measures and policy of the Government without exercising any control over them."<sup>40</sup>

Morley was not prepared to concede parliamentary government to India, but he wanted the spirit of English institutions to permeate the Indian administration. Minto was not prepared to admit even this and insisted on perpetuating autocracy. The attempt failed and within a decade a new Act came into operation sweeping away the Morley-Minto edifice.

The reforms might have afforded strength, in various ways, to maintain British hold over India in a better way for the time being and divided and weakened than nationalist forces, but the inevitable ultimate consequence was the partition of country, the emergence of Pakistan and the final withdrawal of England from India in 1947.

It is thus quite obvious that the Minto-Morley reforms failed to afford any kind of constitutional solution to the existing political problems facing the country. The demand of the radicals for the attainment of *swaraj* raised with full enthusiasm in the

year 1907 remained totally unfulfilled which led to the spread of dissatisfaction in many quarters. This led to much bitterness in the coming years amongst moderates and extremists. In this difference in reaction of the two different ideology groups in the Indian National Congress lay the success and fulfilment of the cherished objective of Morley and Minto. The dissensions in the Congress grew stronger and the two divergent groups turned to their organization for solving their problems.

As a result of all these developments, the echo of Tilak's famous and popular declaration, '*Swaraj* is our birth-right, and we shall have it', began to reverberate in every nook and corner, and his name and fame became dominant in the political firmament of the country.<sup>41</sup> Under his leadership and guidance, the Congress secured a broad base and lower middle classes were brought to its fold. This was the spectacular result which he achieved and a result of his hurricanes political tours in various parts of India. His propaganda for *swaraj* and Home Rule was a danger signal for the British bureaucratic steel frame.

At this point of time, the British government felt much concern and anxiety over the prevailing political situation in the country. It made a serious attempt to assuage the bitter feelings of the dissatisfied elements and thus divert their attention by annulling the most unpopular measure of Partition of Bengal in December 1911, exactly on the occasion of the coronation ceremony of the Emperor George V held in Delhi amidst a huge gathering of officials, non-officials and prominent public men and transferring of the capital from Calcutta to the traditional metropolitan of India since ancient times. In fact, the requisite parliamentary legislation of this effect was enacted in 1912. But the effect of this restitution was temporary in contents. The public agitation, on doubt, became less clamorous only for the time being. Some Muslims who had hailed the creation of a Muslim province did not show much resentment as the united Bengal still had a Muslim majority though not preponderant as in East Bengal. It was largely on account of the reversal of the unpopular measure that on the eve of the First World War in 1914, the national movement was

comparatively at a low ebb. The reasons were obvious. The moderates had lost their appeal, if any, to the public and other leader like Bepin Chandra Pal and Lala Lajpat Rai had lost their hold over the people for the time being. Their self-imposed exile had enabled them, though not with much success, to keep up their linkage and keep up the fight from their distant bases in England and U.S.A. The opening years of the First World War led to the emergence of new leadership in on less a person than Gandhi who was to play a conspicuous political role for more than three decades—a period which has deep linkage with the freedom struggle against the *Raj*.

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## CHAPTER : 2

# Emergence of Gandhi-I

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The commencement of movement at any moment of the our history poses a number of debatable questions for a student involved in historical researches. A few fundamental issues are: who is the leader of the movement; who are his supporters, the category of persons who are active participants: is the movement regional or all-India in character; duration of the movement; policy of the government towards the movement: its success or failure and ultimate reaction of the leadership.

Talking of the first great movement against the *Raj* which was the culmination of a reaction engendered after a slavery of about two centuries, one could enumerate reaction and opposition to the alien domination shown during 19th century. The great revolt of 1857, though a failure in its overall results, regenerated a spirit of agitation deeply mingled with a sense of patriotism which showed its eruption both in the second-half of 19th century and first decade of the 20th century. India governed by a number of Viceroys like Ripon, Curzon, Minto, Hardinge and Chelmsford witnessed numerous historic events which showed way to a larger movement in 1920s. In fact, the foundation of the Indian National Congress, its initial manifesto and subsequent changes in it; the bureaucratic measures of Curzon, Swadeshi movement, the foundation of Muslim League, Minto-Morley Reforms, and last but not the least, the beginning of the global war in 1914—all had greatly effected the working of minds of those Indians who were to play a major role in the near future,

The Non-Cooperation Movement has deep linkage with the fundamental political problems of the time. Left with no hope of the grant of constitutional concessions at the end of the First World War, the Indian National Congress had also to encounter the serious implications of the Rowlatt Bills, the



Jallianwala Bagh massacre and the Khilafat issue. The programme of Boycott of various government institutions was placed before the nation with the promise of "Swaraj in one year". Serious efforts were made by the Congress leadership to mobilise the human resources at all-India level against the *Raj*. The participation in the movement was from professionals and non-professionals, men and women, businessmen, intellectuals, peasants and workers. The movement, however, did not last for a long-time, rather it was suspended after one and half-a-year, in February 1922 on account of a Massacre of some policemen at Chauri Chaura, near Gorakhpur. The plea was taken that the creed of non-violence had been seriously violated by the *Satyagrahis*

"The masses—the peasants and workers—came into the national movement primarily in the Gandhian era. This is perhaps the most important aspect of the growth of the national movement. But it is no less important—and this is often ignored—that the capitalists as a class also came into the movement, and came to support it actively, though primarily financially, only during this era. Neither the Moderates nor the Extremists had able to get the active support of this class since both the class and its contradiction with imperialism matured fully only during and after the First World War. Moreover, the Moderate and Extremist movements were not socially or politically significant enough for the capitalist class to make a determined attempt to dominate them. But once the national movement became a powerful mass movement, the bourgeoisie could not afford to have it turn against itself by continuing to pursue the earlier policy of apathy and neglect towards it. Thus, to repeat the extension of the social base of the movement to the capitalist class was an important and a new feature of the movement in its Gandhian phase as its extension to the workers and peasants'.<sup>1</sup>

Writing in *Young India* about the clear definition of the Non-Cooperation Movement, Gandhi explained, '...We must voluntarily put up with the losses and inconveniences that arise from having to withdraw our support from a Government that is ruling against our will. Possession of power and riches is a crime under an unjust Government, poverty in that case is a virtue, says Thoreau. It may be that in the transition stage

we may make mistakes, there may be avoidable suffering. These Things are preferable to national emasculation.

'We must refuse to wait for the wrong to be right till the wrong-doer has been roused to a sense of inequality. We must not, for fear of ourselves or others having to suffer, remain participators in it. But we must combat the wrong by ceasing to assist the wrong-doer directly or indirectly.'<sup>2</sup>

Gandhi made an important announcement on 23 July 1920 in connection with the inauguration of the Non-Cooperation Movement on 1st August which would be a day of fasting and prayer and the suspension of any kind of business. Bal Gangadhar Tilak promised his all support for the movement. But unfortunately, he passed away at mid-night preceding the dawn of 1st August. Gandhi who was one of the pall bearers along with the Ali Brothers, Dr. Saifud Din Kitchlew and numerous others, stated, 'My strongest bulwark is gone'. In an obituary note he wrote, 'A giant among men has fallen. The roar of the lion is hushed...For us he will go down to the generations yet unborn as a maker of modern India. They will revere his memory as a man who lived for them and died for them...Let us erect for the only Lokamanya of India an imperishable movement by waving into our own lives his bravery, his simplicity, wonderful industry and his love of his country'.

The special session of the Indian National Congress held in Calcutta on 4 September 1920 was a significant phenomenon in the inauguration of the Non-Cooperation Movement. The presidential address delivered by Lala Lajpat Rai was historic and most remarkable in contents. It covered in a comprehensive way the political situation in India, particularly in the Punjab as a result of the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy and the clamping of martial law in the province, the Muslim grievances and their agitation for khilafat, economic and social conditions as result of British rule in India, the Reforms Scheme, the efforts so far undertaken by the leadership of the Congress for gaining the political aim, and, last but not the least, the line of action to be adopted by the people of India during the ensuing movement. He indeed elaborated these major points in a comprehensive way. He stated thus.<sup>3</sup>

'Our politics are no more of the old humdrum kind, about which practically there was none, or, if at all, very little difference

of opinion. We are no longer contented with resolutions, prayers and memorials. We have advanced beyond the first stage of very humble submission, have crossed the boundaries of respectful demand, and have entered into the arena of backing our demands by vigorous and compelling action of a peaceful kind. The country is at the present moment in the throes of a momentous struggle. The Anglo-Indian press has designated it as revolutionary. There are many people to whom the word revolution is like a red rag to a bull. I am not one of them. Words do fear me. It is no use blinking the fact that we are passing through a revolutionary period, may we are already in the grip of a mighty revolution, a comprehensive and all-covering one, religious, intellectual, educational, social, economic and political. We are by instinct and tradition averse to revolutions. Traditionally, we are a slow going people; but when we decide to move, we do move quickly and by rapid strides. No living organism can altogether escape revolutions in the course of its existence. Our national history records many such revolutions. But the revolutionary struggle through which we are now passing has been brought to our shores by our rulers. It is they who completely changed without our consent and sometimes against our wishes, the whole structure of our social life by introducing revolutionary economic changes in the country. We never asked for them, we never desired them; but primarily in their own interests add for their own benefit they introduced them. Along with these economic changes, they have partially, if not completely, changed our outlook of life their system of education, by their newspapers, by their laws and by their courts. Some of these changes we would very much like to undo, but whether we or even they can do so now is at best problematic. Any way, the present political situation is a natural outcome of their own policy and is their handwork. If the anyone is to be blamed for it (I for one do not blame anyone), it is they themselves. Many of them would probably like to set the hands of the clock back but it is no longer in their power nor is it in ours to do so. We are following a course while we shall have to keep to, and whether we wish it or not, we are, I repeat in the thick of a great struggle, the and of which no one can foresee. The better mind of the country is opposed to the use of any kind of violence, whether

of language or of deed, in bringing the struggle to a satisfactory close; we are doing our level best sincerely and honestly to achieve our aim and by peaceful means and with the sincerest desire to keep our connection with the ruling class on a basis of mutual friendship and reciprocal interest. But there are persons among the latter who are bent upon thwarting us, who professedly and openly claim their right to rule us by the sword, and who maintain that they have a right to exploit us by all the means available to them by virtue of their military and intellectual power. We are thus face to face with a great struggle between the forces of democratic change, English and Indian, and reactionary militarism. In order to go through the struggle successfully, we will require all the manliness and strength, all wisdom and tact and all the determination and strength we are capable of putting forth. Above all what we need most is calmness and coolness of judgement, moderation in language and firmness in action.<sup>4</sup>

The happenings in the Punjab in 1919 during the administration of Michael O' Dwyer met with a scathing criticism by the Congress president. The Congress delegates, assembled from all over India, although well aware of the ghastly tragedy in the *Bagh*, were once again comprehensively briefed about the severe measures taken by the British civilians and defence officials.

To arrive at a proper understanding of the position, one has to look into a whole lot of circumstances which preceded the agitation against the Rowlatt Act and to bear in mind that the person who is principally responsible for the Punjab tragedy, the man whose general policy created the atmosphere which made it possible for a Dyer, a Bosworth Smith, an O' Brien, a Devoting, a Frank Johnson and other smaller fry, to commit the unmentionable outrages of which they were guilty, in the five days immediately preceding the introduction of Martial Law, and all through its continuance in the spring of 1919 in the Punjab, is Sir Michael O' Dwyer, From the very moment he took charge of the province, he set before him an ideal of government which was Prussian in conception. Prussian in aim and Prussian in execution. For six long years he occupied himself in working out his ideals and in carrying out his plans. Every item was carefully thought out, and with equal care

entrusted to agents who were most fitted and willing to achieve the end desired by the Head of the Government. If ever there intervened an obstacle or a hindrance it was removed without the least pang of conscience, and without the slightest consideration of its morality or even legality, so much so that even the European members of the Indian Civil Service who refused to endorse his opinions or to carry out his mandate and to retire into the background.

"The policy of militarism, however, reached its climax with the advent in the province of Sir Michael O'Dwyer who had been absent from the province for about 15 years, having originally served there in minor capacities, returned as the head of the Government with a determination to crush the spirit which had made 1907 and 1910 possible. In 1913 when he took charge of the province, the people had considerably changed from what they had been when he was last there. They were not so very submissive and there was a little political awakening also. To crush this political awakening was one of his principal aims. So when he returned, he set before him as his ideal a Prussian system of administration. All through the period of this office he was guided by that ideal.<sup>5</sup>

- (i) 'I charge him with having deliberately intensified the policy of 'divide and rule' by keeping apart the Mohammedans from the Hindus and both from the Sikhs.
- (ii) I charge him with having created fresh political divisions between the people of the province by drawing purely artificial and mischievous distinctions between martial and educated classes and between the rural and urban interests and creating unhealthy rivalry between them.
- (iii) I charge him with having made illegal use of the process of law and of his authority for recruitment purposes, and for getting contributions for the war loan and other war funds.
- (iv) I charge him with having condoned and in a way encouraged the most brutal and diabolic deeds of those who were his tools in recruiting and war loan campaigns and with having failed to check bribery

and corruption among the subordinate police and magistracy.

- (v) I charge him with having debased and misused the forms and processes of law for the purpose of crushing those who would not bend their knees to him and who showed the slightest independence of spirit and a desire for political advancement
- (vi) I charge him with having deliberately deceived the Government of India as to the necessity of Martial Law and as to the necessity of trying cases of ordinary sedition under the process of that law. He was guilty of a clear falsehood at this stage when he suggested to the Government of India that the General Officer Commanding in the Punjab agreed with his views.
- (vii) I charge him with having deliberately manipulated the continuance of Martial Law for vindictive and punitive purposes when there was no rebellion and there was on likelihood of a recrudescence of disturbances in that province.
- (viii) I charge him with having been instrumental, by express or tacit consent and by encouragement, by word and deed, in the promulgation of barbarous orders and the infliction of barbarous punishments and humiliations on the people of the Punjab.
- (ix) I charge him at least with being an accessory after the event of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre. By his unqualified approval of the Jallianwala massacre he made himself responsible for all the outrages committed by the Martial Law administrators in pursuance of his policy.
- (x) I charge him with having connived at perfectly illegal exactions from the people of the Punjab in the shape of punitive fines and penalties.
- (xi) I charge him with culpable neglect of duty in not going to Amritsar, first on the 11th (April 1919) after the deplorable events of the 10th, and then on the 14th after the massacre at the Jallianwala Bagh.
- (xii) I charge him, lastly, with having extorted addresses from the people of the Punjab, on the eve of his

departure by illegal and mean threats, one of them having been altered in material particular when in the custody of his minions, and having made a dishonest use of them in his defence in England.<sup>6</sup>

The Khilafat issue was dealt with in a comprehensive way. Indeed the second question that had been referred to the special session of the congress, for consideration and decision was the question of the Khilafat. 'Seventy millions of our Muslim countrymen are stirred over it. The question has two aspects: the religious and the political. We of the Indian National Congress have no jurisdiction to going to the merits of the Khilafat question from the religious point of view. In the words of Mr. Leland Buxton "it does not in the least matter what Professor this or Doctor that thinks the Muslims ought to believe. What does matter is, that the vast majority of Sunni Muslims do believe that the Sultan of Turkey is their Khalifa and the interests of Islam require him to be the head of a large, powerful and independent State. The Mohammedan Law books define the boundaries of such a State.

'There is perfect unanimity among the Mohammedans of India on the religious merits of the question. I do not believe there could be more than one person in a million among the Sunni Mohammedans of India who entertains any doubts in the matter. We may then take it for granted that the interpretation put upon this matter by the Central Khilafat Committee is correct. It was a matter for our Mohammedan countrymen to decide and they have decided it. They contend that the Turkish Peace Treaty violates the fundamentals of Islam, prevents from fulfilling their religious obligations, makes it impossible for them to maintain friendly relations with a nation which is the cause of it.

'They also maintain that the Turkish Settlement has violated the solemn pledges given to the people of India by British statesmen during the War.

'In the first place, after the declaration of the War between England and Turkey in 1914, Government of India on behalf of His Majesty's Government as also the Government of France and Russia promptly issued a proclamation assuring "His Majesty's most loyal Muslim subject" that "no question of a

religious character was involved" in the War "and disclaiming any British designs the Holy places of Islam." Again in January 1918 speaking in the name of the whole Empire the British Prime Minister made the following unambiguous and remarkable pronouncement:

'Nor are we fighting to deprive Turkey of its capital or of the rich and renowned lands of Asia Minor which are predominantly Turkish in race'. Finally, came the armistice with Turkey, and it is important to recall that it was signed on the basis of President Wilson's twelfth point. (One of his famous the 8th January 1918), which is as follows:

"That the Turkish portions of the present Ottoman Empire should be assured of secure sovereignty, but the other nationalities now under Turkish rule should be assured security of life and autonomous development."

Now, ask the Muslims, have these promises and pledges been redeemed? It is the bare truth to say that in the treaty presented to the Turkish Plenipotentiaries on May 11th last and since signed by the Turkish Government, very single principle contained in the declarations I have cited above, has been palpably violated. Non-interference with the Muslim religious practices and obligations, non-molestation of Islamic Holy Places and respect for Turkish territorial and National integrity have all been thrown overboard. This is the Muslim contention and the whole of India has accepted it as true.

'One word more and I will have finished this part of my address. It has been pointed out to me by well meaning friends that in supporting the Muslim claim for the maintenance of the Turkish Empire, I am advocating Imperialism to which I am otherwise so bitterly opposed. Well, Ladies and Gentlemen, I do desire the destruction of Imperialism but I do not desire the destruction of some Empires for the benefit of others. In my judgement, Imperialism should be eliminated from the affairs of men and federation of sisterly states should take its place, but so long as there are Empires, it is not in the interests of humanity that some of them should be dissolved for the enlargement and glorification of others. In the present state of world politics, the liberty of such states as are now being created by the dissolution of the Turkish, Empire is not worth



even a day's purchase. Syria, Palestine and Mesopotamia are being absorbed in the British and French Empires Arabia and Kurdistan and armenia cannot but be vassal states. Turkey itself, under the Treaty, is hardly in a better position than the Nizam of Hyderabad. In a unguarded moment Lloyd George has said, 'He have got Constantinople. We have got Mesopotamia the have got Palestine.' The Allied would have been (perfectly) justified in insisting on establishing autonomous government in all the component parts of the Turkish Empire, with a tie of federation joining them all for purposes of defence. But as the matter at present stands, Muslim independence is entirely gone. What Arabia, Palestine, Mesopotamia, Syria, Kurdistan and Anatolia are getting is only a shadow and not the substance.<sup>7</sup>

Gandhi elaborated his idea on *Swaraj* in a comprehensive way in his article on 'Swaraj in one Year' in *Young Indian* dated 22 September 1920.<sup>8</sup> 'Much laughter has been indulged in at my expense for having told the Congress audience at Calcutta that if there was sufficient response to my programme of non-co-operation *Swaraj* would be attained in one year. Some have ignored my condition and laughed because of the impossibility of getting *Swaraj* any how within one year. Others have spelt the 'if' in capitals and suggested that if 'ifs' were permissible in argument, any absurdity could be proved to be a possibility. My proposition, however is based on a mathematical calculation. And I venture to say that true *Swaraj* is a practical impossibility without due fulfilment of my conditions. *Swaraj* means a state such that we can maintain our separate existence without the presence of the English. If is to be a partnership, it must be partnership at will. There can be no *Swaraj* without our feeling and being the equals of Englishmen. Today we feel that we are dependent upon them for our internal security, for an armed peace between the Hindus and the Musslmans, for our education and for the supply of daily wants, nay, even for the settlement of our religious squables. The *Rajahs* are dependent upon the British for their powers and millionaires for their millions. The British know our helplessness and Sir Thomas Holland cracks jokes quite legitimately at the expense of non-co-operationists. To get *Swaraj* there is to rid of our helplessness. The problem is no doubt stupendous even as it is for the fabled lion who having been brought up in the company

of goats found it impossible to feel that he was a lion. As Tolstoy used to put it, mankind often laboured under hypnotism. Under its spell continuously we feel the feeling of helplessness. The British themselves cannot be expected to help us out of it. On the contrary they din into our ears that we shall be fit to govern ourselves only by slow educative processes. The "Time" suggested that if we boycott the council we shall lose the opportunity of a training in *Swaraj*. I have no doubt that there are many who believe what the "Times" says. It even resorts to a falsehood. It audaciously says that Lord Milner's Mission listened to the Egyptians only when they were ready to life the boycott of the Egyptian Cauncil. For me the only training in *Swaraj* we need is the ability to defend ourselves against the whole world and to live our natural life in perfect freedom even though it may be full of defects. Good government is no substitute for self-government. The Afghans have a bad government but it is self-government. I envy them. Japanese learnt the art through a sea of blood. And if we today had the power to drive out the English by superior brute force, we would be counted their superiors, and in spite of our inexperience in debating at the Council table or the holding executive offices, we would be held fit to government ourselves. For brute-force is the only lest the west has hitherto recognised. The Germans were defeated not because they were necessarily in the wrong, but because the allied Powers were found to possess greater brute strength. In the end, therefore India must either learn the art of war which the British will not teach her or she must follow her own way of discipline and self-sacrifice through non-cooperation. It is as amazing as it is humiliating that less than one hundred thousand white men should be able to rule three hundred and fifteen million Indians. They do so somewhat undoubtedly by force but more by securing our co-operation in a thousand ways and making us more and more helpless and dependent on them as time goes forward. Let us not mistake reformed councils, more law, courts and even governorship for real freedom or power. They are but subtler methods of emasculation. The Britisn cannot rule us by more force. And so they resort to all means, honourable and dishonourable, in order to retain their hold on India. They want India's billions and they want India's man-power for their imperialistic greed.

If we refuse to supply them with men and money, we achieve our goal, namely, *Swaraj*, equality, manliness.

The cup of our humiliation was filled during the closing scenes in the Viceregal council. Mr. Sastri could not move his resolution on the Punjab. The Indian victims of Jallianwala received Rs. 1,250, the English victims of mob frenzy received lacs. The officials who were guilty of crimes against those whose servants they were, reprimanded. And the councillors were satisfied. If India were powerful, India would not have stood this addition of insult to her injury.

I do not blame the British. If we were weak in numbers as they are, we too would perhaps have resorted to the same methods as they are now employing. Terrorism and deception are weapons not of the strong but of the weak. The British are weak in numbers, we are weak in spite of our numbers. The result is that each is dragging the other down. It is common experience that Englishmen lose in character after residence in India, and that Indians lose in courage and manliness by contact with Englishmen. The process of weakening is good neither for us, two nations, nor for the world.

‘But if we Indians take care of ourselves, the English and the rest of the world take care of themselves. Our contribution to the world’s progress must, therefore consist in setting our own house in order.

‘Training in arms for the present is out of the question. I go a step further and believe that India has a better mission for the world. It is within her power to show that she can achieve her destiny by pure self-sacrifice, i.e., self-purification. This can be done only by non-cooperation. And non-co-operation is possible only when those who commenced to co-operate begin the process of withdrawal. If we can but free ourselves from the threefold Maya of Government controlled schools, Government law-courts, and legislative councils, and truly control our own education, regulate our disputes and be indifferent to their legislation, we are ready to govern ourselves, and we are only then ready to ask the Government servants, whether civil or military, to resign, and tax-payers to suspend payment of taxes.

'And is it such an impracticable proposition to expect parents to withdraw their children from schools and colleges and establish their own institutions or to ask lawyers to suspend their practice and devote their whole time and attention to national service against payment, where necessary, of their maintenance, or to ask candidates for councils not to enter councils and lend their passive or active assistance to the legislative machinery through which all control is exercised. The movement of non-co-operation is nothing but an attempt to isolate the brute force of the British from all the trappings under which it is hidden and to show that brute-force by itself cannot, for one single moment, hold India.

'But I frankly confess that, until the three conditions mentioned by more fulfilled, there is no *Swaraj*. We may not go on taking our college degrees, taking thousands of rupees monthly from clients for cases which can be finished in five minutes and taking the keepest delight in wasting national time on the council floor and still expect to gain national self-respect.

'The last though not the least important part of the *Maya* still remains to be considered. That is *Swaraj*. Had we not abandoned *Swadeshi*, we need not have been in the present fallen state. If we could get rid of the economic slavery, we manufacture our own cloth and at the present moment only by hand spinning and hand weaving.

'All this means discipline, self-denial, self-sacrifice, organising ability, confidence and courage. If we show this in one year among the classes that today count, and make public opinion, certainly gain *Swaraj* within one year. If I told that even we who lead have not these qualities in us, there certainly will never be *Swaraj* for India, but then we shall have no right to blame the English for what they are doing? Our salvation and its time are solely dependent upon us.'

After three moths, the thirty-fifth session of the Indian National Congress was held at Nagpur on December 26-31, 1920 under the presidentship of a prominent Congress leader, C. Vijiaraaghavachari<sup>9</sup>. The chairman of the reception committee, Jannalal Bajaj, reviewed the political situation in India in his stirring speech. He criticised the policies of the government in

his reference about Defence of India Act, Rowlatt Act, Administration of Michael O' Dwyer, firing in the Jallianwala Bagh and the Khilafat.<sup>10</sup>

The presidential address by C. Vijayaraghavacharia was fairly comprehensive in its contents, as it dealt varied themes like fundamental rights, unwritten constitution, nature and functions of the machinery of the government, views of Edmund Burke and Dicey, powers of the legislature, responsible Government of India Act, 1919, British Parliamentary Statutes, Hindu idea of polity, relationship between the ruler and the ruled, the political situation in India, specially in the Punjab, the Khilafat issues etc.

'Out to this situation, entirely and wantonly created by the bureaucracy a new situation was adroitly manufactured with the result that the great Punjab Tragedy was enacted and a dark page, the darkest in the world's annals as yet known, was added to the history of India.

'The agony of the Punjab and the sympathetic grief of the whole country were both increased by the manner in which this dark episode in the British administration of India was, from start to finish, handled and dealt with by the Government of India and by His Majesty's Coalition Government and the Parliament, especially the House of Lords. The one astounding fact that stands out in bold relief as underlying all these transactions here and in England is an unnatural feeling of concept of the people of this country amounting to little short of a feeling on the part of the authorities that we, the people of India hardly belong to humanity, the existence of which feeling was pompously exhibited, as in regard to the claim of sacredness of the person of the Englishman.

'Then came the huge Khilafat fraud. The pledges solemnly made to our Musalman fellow subjects of His Gracious Majesty were edited and quibbled away in the light of success and ancient prejudices of colour and creed and the Sultan of Turkey has been made a mere shadow of what he was, is power prerogative, and territory and even as to the means of self-defence. Apart from the pledges, so wantonly broken, it is but easy to see that the terms of peace, which the Sultan was compelled to accept, were more severe and crushing and

humiliating than those offered to any other people in Europe defeated in the Great War. I desire to call your attention to the adroit attempt made in view to prejudicially affect the state or growing union and the feelings of cordiality between the Musalmans and the non-Musalmans of India that the latter have no interest in this question. I must ask you not to allow yourselves to be deluded into a belief that there is any substance in such a statement. We Indians are so situated that we all must in every way work in harmony and stand together or fall together. Hence it is but natural that Hindus sympathise with their Musalman brethren and sisters in their genuine and intense grief in this connection and, besides, the cause of the national union is sacred purse. But there is an additional aspect to which I must call your attention. The reasons expressed and implied, for the terms of Peace offered to Turkey, the character of the agitation that led to the adoption of those severe terms as well as the nature of the terms themselves, all conspire to disclose the ancient and the incredibly disquieting doctrine of Europe *versus* Asia and we, non-Muslim, Indians, have an equally vital interest with our Muslim fellow subjects in repudiating and fighting this doctrine. Turkey is only good for Asia and Asia is good enough for Turkey. The treaty provides to foreign interference for the protection of European minorities in Turkey and rely alone in this connection...

‘If you fail at this moment, you not only will bar for ever the way of real enterprise for your progeny but will also stain your soul by the sin of neglecting an evident duty which you own to your country and people. But if taking the offering of your wealth in your hands you will come forward to free the flames of this sacred national Yajna you will be contributing to its completion and success and will thus be glorifying for ever yourselves and your people. I have full faith that the businessmen of India will pass through this ordeal most successfully.

‘To the young people I have merely to say that, if they want to know their responsibility towards this national movement they should study the histories of other countries especially when these countries were agitated by such or like national movements. India in her present non-violent campaign

**expect such unparalleled and steady sacrifices from her youth as were made by the youths of Russia, Ireland, Egypt and China, in the revolutionary periods of their history I do not dilate upon this subject, but would surely say this much that the country expects the greatest sacrifices from those of its youthful sons and daughters whose hearts are pure and minds unsophisticated**

**'The fact of the matter is that in this great Yajna, great sacrifices are necessary. Without selflessness and sacrifice no political struggle can ever succeed, and for the success of such a huge undertaking as the liberation of this ancient country from its slavish bondage it is essential that none of us should flinch from any sacrifice, whatsoever. And it is also essential that our hearts should have the strength which is born of truthfulness, confidence and devotion. Gentlemen, a close study of the whole situation fills me with optimism I do not feel the slightest doubt in the ultimate success of this movement especially when I see that in this campaign our leader is a person who, by his great soul force, by his prolonged penance, by his unique and constant devotion to truth, by this plain and simple living, by his astounding fearlessness and his unexplained selflessness, has secured a corner in the hearts of all young and old, who has moved over a practical experience of various political struggles and to whose hands the suffering Indian people have entrusted the reins of their political life. We could at this moment throw away our little doubts and fears and narrowness and should concentrate ourselves on the success of this movement**

**'Regarding the question of Khilafat, the Congress resolved (emphatically) that in view of the fact that on the Khilafat question both the Indian and Imperial Governments have signally failed in their duty towards the Musalmans of India, and the Prime Minister has deliberately broken his pledged word given to them and that it is the duty of every non-Muslim Indian in every legitimate manner to assist his Musalman brother in his attempt to remove the religious calamity that has overtaken him.**

**'And in view of the fact that in the matter of the events of the April of 1919, both the said governments have greatly neglected or failed to protect the innocent people of the Punjab**

and punish officers guilty of unsoldierly and barbarous behaviour towards them and have exonerated Sir Michael O' Dwyer who proved himself, directly or indirectly, responsible for most of the official crimes, and callous to the suffering of the people placed under his administration, and that the debate in the House of Commons and specially in the House of Lords betrayed a woeful lack of sympathy with the people of India, and showed virtual support of the systematic terrorism and frightfulness adopted in the Punjab, and that the latest Viceregal pronouncement is proof of entire absence of repentance in the matter of the Khilafat and the Punjab.

'This Congress is of opinion that there can be no contentment in India without redress of the two aforementioned wrongs and that the only effectual mean to vindicate national honour and to prevent a repetition of similar wrongs in future is the establishment of Swarajya. This Congress is further of opinion that there is no course left open for the people of India but to approve of and adopt the policy of progressive, non-violent, non-co-operation inaugurated by Gandhiji until he said wrongs are righted and Swarajya is established

'And inasmuch as a beginning should be made by the classes who have hitherto moulded and represented public opinion, and inasmuch as Government consolidates its power through titles and honours bestowed on the people, through schools controlled by it, its law courts, and its legislative councils, and inasmuch as it is desirable in the prosecution of the movement to take the minimum risk and to call for the least sacrifice, compatible with the attainment of the desired object, their congress enormously advises:

- (a) surrender of titles and honorary offices and resignation from nominated seats in local bodies;
- (b) refusal to attend Government levees, durbars, and other official and semi-official functions held by Government officials or in their honour;
- (c) gradual withdrawal of children from schools and colleges owned, aided or controlled by Government and in place of such schools and colleges, establishment of national schools and colleges in the various provinces;



- (d) gradual boycott of British courts by lawyers and litigants, and establishment of private arbitration courts by their aid, for the settlement of private disputes;
- (e) refusal on the part of their military, clerical and labouring Mesopotamia;
- (f) withdrawal by candidates of their candidature for election to the Reformed Councils, and refusal on the part of the voters to vote for any candidate who may, despite the Congress advice, offer himself for election;
- (g) boycott of foreign goods.<sup>11</sup>

The Working Committee of the Indian National Congress allowed the members of the provincial Congress committees to launch a civil disobedience in their own areas. But certain conditions were attached to them before they could execute their plans. These conditions were as follows: The civil resister must discard foreign cloth and don *Khaddar*; he must know spinning; he must be a believer in non-violence and a staunch supporter of Hindu-Muslim unity and he must undertake to work for the removal of untouchability for which Gandhi always showed much concern and anxiety.<sup>12</sup>

Another significant feature of the session of the Congress held at Nagpur was that the Muslim League which held its annual session in the same pandal, accepted into the creed of the Congress for *Swaraj*. The prominent Congress leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Motilal Nehru attended this session and, in a way, gave their approval of the resolutions passed there in. Besides other resolutions, the Muslim League passed a resolution entreating Amanulla, the Amir of Afghanistan, to reject any advance made by the Government of India for any kind of treaty or agreement with Great Britain that both Afghanistan and India would cultivate friendly relations between them.<sup>13</sup>

The following important resolutions were passed and thus a clear-cut programme was planned for the execution of the movement at all-India level.

Resolved that, whereas, in the opinion of the Congress, the existing Government of India has forfeited the confidence of the country; and

**Whereas, the people of India are now determined to establish the *Swaraj*; and**

**Whereas, all methods adopted by the people of India prior to the last Special Session of the Indian National Congress have failed to secure due recognition of their rights and liberties and the redress of their many and grievous wrongs, more specially in reference to the Khilafat and the Punjab;**

**Now, this Congress, while reaffirming the resolution on Non-violent Non-co-operation passed at the Special Session of the Congress at Calcutta, declare that the entire or any part or parts, of the scheme of Non-violent Non-co-operation, with the renunciation of voluntary association with the present Government at one end and the refusal to pay taxes at other, should be put in force at a time to be determined by either the Congress or the AICC and that in the meanwhile, to prepare the country for, effective steps should continue to be taken in that behalf.<sup>14</sup>**

- (a) by calling upon the parents and guardians of school children (and not the children themselves) under the age of 16 years to make greater efforts for the purpose of withdrawing them from such schools as are owned, aided or in anyway controlled by Government, and concurrently to provide for their training in national schools or by such other means as may be within their power in the absence of such schools;**
- (b) by calling upon students of the age of 16 and over to withdraw without delay, irrespective of consequences, from institutions owned, aided or in any way controlled by Government, if they feel that it is against their conscience to continue in institutions which are dominated by a system of Government which the nation has solemnly resolved to bring to an end, and advising such students whether to devote themselves to some special service in connection with the non-co-operation movement or to continue their education in national institutions;**
- (c) by calling upon trustees, managers and teachers of Government affiliated or aided schools and Municipalities and Local Boards to help to nationalise them;**

- (d) by calling upon lawyers to make greater efforts to suspend their practice and devote their attention to national service including boycott of law courts by litigants and fellow-lawyers and the settlement of disputes by private arbitration;
- (e) in order to make India economically independent and self-contained by calling upon merchants and traders to carry out a gradual boycott of foreign trade relations, to encourage hand-spinning and hand-weaving and in that behalf by having a scheme of economic boycott planned and formulated by a committee of experts to be nominated by the All India Congress Committee;
- (f) and generally, inasmuch as self-sacrifice is essential to the success of non-co-operation, by calling upon every man and woman in the country to make the utmost possible contribution of self-sacrifice to the national movement.
- (g) by organising committees in each village or group of villages with a provincial central organisation in the principal cities of each province for the purpose of accelerating the progress of non-co-operation;
- (h) by organising a band of national workers for a service to be called the Indian National Service; and
- (i) by taking effective steps to raise a National Fund to be called the All India Tilak Memorial Swarajya Fund for the purpose of financing the foregoing National Service and the Non-co-operation Movement in general.<sup>15</sup>

Lala Lajpat Raj was very unhappy about the functioning of the councils and the role being played by the Indian members whose cooperation in the passage of some Bills was injurious to the interests of the people of India. He criticised the role of Gokhale and Malaviya whose support in some ways helped the government in getting through the Press Act and the Defence of India Act. He stated, 'So far the Indian members have failed to influence the legislatures of the country in the fundamentals of Government policy.... Their cooperation has been more harmful than their absence in the councils could have been...'<sup>16</sup>

In *Young India* dated 10 November 1920, the trenchant criticism was levelled against the Indian councils by no less a prominent Congress leader than C. Rajagopalachari. He clearly reiterated the ineffectiveness of councils to stop the recurrence of the Khilafat and Punjab wrongs, wanton interference of Indian troops in subjugating other nations; use of Indian financial resources to strengthen the administrative capability of the *Raj*; the prevention of the theme of *Swaraj* at all costs; the hindrance in the economic freedom of the people; obstacles in the moral and material well-being of the masses and, last but not the least, to oppose vehemently those elements who raised their voice for the freedom of India'.

Fischer stated in the House of Commons on 27 October 1920 about the boycott of councils,<sup>17</sup> 'It is impossible to estimate the result of the boycott of councils with exactness. But so far this has been the most successful feature of the programme of non-cooperation

'In Madras resignations of honorary offices and council candidatures continue, but there have been no recent renunciation of titles. In Bombay, report is made of intimidation to secure resignation of titles. Many seats are uncontested owing to withdrawal of Congress candidates, and for the two seats in the Indian Legislative Assembly for the Bombay general electorate there were only two nominations; but all-Indian constituencies have nominated candidates, though in many there was a doubt up to the last moment. In the United Provinces there are signs of election rivalry in many districts. In the Punjab, reluctance to make personal sacrifices in limiting the effect of non-co-operation. In Assam, there is no lack of candidates for councils; in only one constituency has there been no nomination. In the Central Provinces, a committee has recently been appointed to secure the boycott of councils and there have been two resignations of titles and three of honorary magistrates.'

The boycott of councils was one of the important items in the Non-Co-operation Movement. There was a widespread feelings in the Congress circles and specially in the mind of Mahatma Gandhi that the functioning of the councils in different provinces of India did not reserve any useful purposes. Besides,

the presence of Indian members, elected in a cumbersome indirect political method, did not make any headway what was expected of them i.e. effective opposition to the *Raj*, a forceful plea for some more constitutional reforms and apposed the government of the inadequacy of the political concessions hitherto granted to the people of India with the passage of Minto-Morley Reforms and Montagu Chelmsford Reforms

A prominent member of the Bihar and Orissa Legislative Council, Gopabandhu Das expressed his sentiments thus: 'What good came out of my wailing prayers inside the Council for the last four years?.... It is impossible to expect spread of education from this administration. You (the Lt. Governor) yourself went round the Puri district and saw people dying like flies in the last famine, but your administrator said, "this is not famine", Do you think any goodwill come out of cooperation with such a Government?'<sup>18</sup>

In the House of Commons when asked by J.D. Rees about the participation of government servants in the Non-Cooperation Movement, replied thus: 'According to my information there have been and few cases among subordinate Government servants of sympathy with the non-cooperation movement. The form in which these persons expressed their sympathy was to resign Government service. I understand that the theory is that Government servants should show their non-cooperation by resigning if they have other means of support.'<sup>19</sup>

The Non-Brahmin Federation of Presidency passed a resolution in January 1921 'Condemning the non-cooperation scheme of Mr. Gandhi and the Indian National Congress as calculated to subvert all constitutional agitation and to bring the country to chaos and anarchy and calling on all patriotic Indians to oppose... (And) six associations representing the depressed classes in the Bombay presidency... Urging that non-cooperation aims at the destruction of constituted authority and the withdrawal of British rule to which the progress of the lower classes is entirely due.'<sup>20</sup>

The Viceroy opined in his telegraphic communication to the Secretary of State on 23 January 1921, 'The lull in non-cooperation movement has disappeared—agitation is being carried on vigorously in Patna, Tirhut and Bhagalpur. Local

arbitration courts and Save Samitis are being established. National schools are being set up..<sup>21</sup>

On 8 February 1921, the Viceroy wrote to the Secretary of State about the state of educational institutions in central India. Active agitation in support of non-cooperation is gaining strength and is principally directed boycott of colleges and schools to which action of Calcutta students gave further strength. The movement is spreading in Nagpur and Berar Divisions and at Jubbulpur, and a disquieting feature is the attempt to undermine teachers. National Schools are being established in several places and in Nagpur the number of students in National Schools is stated have risen to 450.<sup>22</sup>

Regarding the political condition in the Punjab, the Viceroy state in February 1921, 'Non-Cooperation Panchayats are set up in different villages with the object of boycotting executive authority. Students and hired preachers have been sent out from Lahore to further non-cooperation movement.'<sup>23</sup>

The Viceroy opined in the last week of February 1921. 'The non-cooperation agitation shows no signs of abatement. Poison is spreading to large villages,... There has been some cases of the difficulty to Government servants obtaining supplies on tour and social boycott continues to be practised'<sup>24</sup>

These were in brief the proceedings of a meeting of Andhra Provincial Congress Committee hold in Bezwada on 7th January 1922 with B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya in the chair. "The committee is of opinion that the time has come for the introduction of non-payment of taxes in this province which is the last item in the programme of non-violent, non-cooperation. 'This resolution applies to the non-payment of land tax, quit-rent, and water tax payable to the British Government in places where the Ryotwari system is prevalent, and the non-payment of water rates payable to the British Government in Zamindari tract, and to the non-payment of income tax all over Andhradesa'<sup>25</sup>

Besides the boycott of election to the Legislative Assembly and the provincial councils, the boycott of law courts was another significant item in the programme of the Non-Cooperation Movement. The Congress mandate for the boycott of courts was obeyed by about 1500 lawyers. The prominent members of the bar who boycotted the courts were Pandit

Motilal Nehru, C.R. Das, Dr Rajendra Prasad, Vallabhbhai Patel, Dr. Saifud Din Kitchlew, Pandit Rambhaji Dutt, Asaf Ali, M.R. Jayakar and others who also surrendered their highly profitable legal profession. The country was profoundly stirred and unprecedented wave of enthusiasm ran through India's teeming millions. Indeed unparalleled sense of enthusiasm, fervour, devotion and sacrifice were witnessed in various regions of India.<sup>26</sup>

Gandhi, himself a barrister, was well aware of the boycott of the legal institutions functioning under the government. In a huge gathering of people at Trichinopoly on 17 August 1920, he said, 'Law courts are one of the greatest symbols of power.'<sup>26</sup> Gandhi made it clear further: 'We shall promote arbitration courts and dispense justice, pure, simple home-made justice, swadeshi justice to our countrymen. That is what suspension of practice means.'<sup>27</sup>

'The power of a government depends on its courts. Through courts it punishes the guilty and it is thro' them that civil disputes are settled, and in this way the government acquires control over the people.'

Dr. Rajendra Prasad narrates in his *Autobiography* that 'one of the principal items on our programme was the establishment of *panchayats*, which we fulfilled in a great measure. We set up a number of *panchayats* which began settling disputes affectively. At one place, the *panchayat* acquired so much authority that it worked almost like a regular court of law. People filed cases and paid court fees. Most of the decisions were accepted by the people and only in some cases did trouble arise. There were two difficulties. One was that the people began to bring in long-standing disputes to the *panchayats*. If the *panchayats* rejected them as being time-barred, the people bitterly criticised the *panchayats* as being no better than other courts. On the other hand, if the *panchayats* took up the disputes and gave their decision there was no means of enforcing it against the parties concerned. Another difficulty was that social boycott was resorted to as punishment, and, though we discouraged this, our directives were sometimes ignored and there were occasional clashes with the police.'

Gandhi recorded his verdict in *Hind Swaraj* in 1908, 'The lawyers have enslaved India, have accentuated Hindu Mohammedan dissensions and have confirmed English authority. The law's delays and expenses in India were too well known to need any elaboration. Motilal Nehru, one of the most successful layers in the land quoted a proverb to illustrate the ruinous effects of litigation. '*Adalat main jo jita so hara, jo hara, so mara*', success in the court is defeat. defeat is death'.

Gandhi opined about the lawyers and the functioning of the law-courts in India in the October 1920 issue of *Young India*. He also cited the example of legal profession in South Africa where he had launched the political struggle against the government.

'If we are not under the spell of lawyers and law-courts and if there were no touts to tempt us into the quagmire of the courts and to appeal to our barest passions, we would be leading a much happier life than we do today... Has a single Englishman suffered the extreme penalty of the law or anything like it for brutal murders in India?... Without its law courts the Government must perish in a day.

'The economic drain that the law-courts causes has at no time been considered. Every institution founded under the present system is run on a most extravagant scale. Law courts are probably the most extravagantly run.'

In fact, during 1920-21, the Government of India viewed the movement with all seriousness as it expected disturbances in some regions when it gained momentum after the Nagpur Congress. The Congress volunteers showed so much enthusiasm and patriotic fervour, that their respect for the authority manned by the *Raj* had vanished. In some areas when the situation became unmanageable and indiscipline had led to violent action, the authorities were put into numerous hazards. The movement posed serious political problems for the Viceroy and other functionaries. Reading wrote to the Secretary of State on 9 February 1922. 'The Government of India do not seek to minimise in any way fact that great anxiety is caused by the situation.'<sup>28</sup> Loyd George. The then Governor of Bombay, expressed much worry about the Congress and its movement. About Gandhi he wrote in a note mingled with concern and



anxiety: 'He (Gandhi) gave us a scare. Gandhi's was the most colossal experiment in world history and it came within an inch of success.'<sup>29</sup> Lord Templewood expressed his anxiety thus: 'It looked as if the Government of India would break down for want of the political support to direct it and manpower to work it.'<sup>30</sup>

Undoubtedly, Gandhi enkindled the spirit of sacrifice and selfless service, amongst his associates and followers, without resorting to any kind of violent means. This was done consistently through the media of his meetings with people and personal contacts, speeches and writings in *Young India*. He made it clear that at a time when the movement was at its peak, 'Man must fill the jails. Men must prove to the Government that the awakening is not confined to a few men but it has permeated the masses, that the spirit of non-violence possesses not merely a select number but that it possesses the best part of India.'<sup>31</sup>

For about two years, the masses of India, representing some of the prominent categories of society, had been enthusiastically astir with all manner of manifestations of unrest, disaffection, anger and defiance. Pledges taken earlier, at the time of the inauguration of the Non-Cooperation Movement, were repeatedly inculcated in the minds of the volunteers who were advised to function under discipline laid down for one and all. The new spirit of nationalism engendered after the First World War was no more seriously concerned with the constitutional reforms, a demand made by the Indian National Congress during the first-two decades of the twentieth century. It was now well prepared for repudiation of the *Raj*, considered as 'unwanted' foreign government. The example of this kind of model was glaringly visible when the Duke of Connaught paid a visit to India in 1921. The visit of the symbol of British Imperialism at a time when the pitch of resentment, and feelings of anti-*Raj* had greatly provoked the people who showed him black flags and cried themselves hoarse with anti-British slogans. The observance of *Hartals* in the prominent commercial centres of the major cities and towns was a glaring phenomenon.

The leadership of the Congress was quite confident of its strength, mobilisation of cooperation and unity of the people of India. It sought the support of teachers, lawyers, doctor traders, women, students, various types of functionaries in the villages, priests, ulemas and cultivators. It could thus have much impact and appeal for the lowliest in the Indian society. In August 1920, Gandhi explained thus: 'I believe and every-body must grant that no Government can exist for a single moment without the cooperation of the people, willing or forced, and if people suddenly withdrew their cooperation in every detail, the Government will come to a standstill.'

The Indian National Congress was of the firm conviction that its movement was not at all unconstitutional as it was planned as well as executed, at various levels, in a non-violent way, without an element of secrecy involved in it. The British government, on the other hand, felt much obstruction in the smooth functioning of the administrative machinery and Lord Chelmsford, therefore was highly critical at its very inauguration. He called it 'the most foolish scheme' which according to him would bring ruin to those who had any stake in the government. He also lost no time in arousing the fears of the propertied class which, he explained, would be badly affected by this movement.

The persistent propaganda on a large scale tinged with the severe criticism of the functioning of the government and the bureaucracy led to the formation of rival national institutions. The Congress leadership won favour with the masses of India by launching popular measures like the no-tax and no-rent campaigns. The people were greatly encouraged to refuse to pay municipal, *chaukidari* and local board taxes. Considerable success was achieved in some areas of Bihar, Bengal and Madras in this regard, but the breach of forest regulations was a glaring phenomenon in the Madras Presidency. In all these Models, *satyagrahis* built up their strength and vitality through sacrifice, abstinence, suffering and self-deprivations.

The organization, operation and effectiveness of the Non-Cooperation Movement have met with critical assessment by no less important, prominent public men and political leaders

than Rabindranath Tagore, Annie Besant, Surendranath Banerjea, Narayan Chandavarkar and some liberal leaders, Tagore called the movement as negative and destructive in its nature: Banerjea and liberal leaders opined that it was subversive and engendered hatred towards the *Raj*; Chandavarkar stated that it was against the traditions of Indian culture, and Annie Besant criticised it by saying that the movement aimed at paralysing the administrative machinery of the government.

While giving his assessment about the excitement, sympathy and participation of the people of Bihar in this movement, Dr. Rajendra Prasad stated in his *Autobiography* thus: 'Public meetings were the order of the day in Bihar. There was not one little corner of the province where the Congress did not penetrate. Congress workers were active every day and explaining the Congress programme, the whole province was agog. I toured the entire length and breadth of Bihar in 1920 and for the first time I saw the whole province and made innumerable contacts. Meetings of 5,000 to 10,000 were quite common.'

The Non-Cooperation Movement generated a sense of new kind of reaction in the minds of the British bureaucracy in India and the Home Government in London. The movement though not for a long-time shook their self-confidence as well as their belief in the rightness of their imperial mission, doubts of varied nature began to trouble them and one serious item in such doubts was the justification of the British rule on the foreign soil. The results of their economic, cultural, educational as well as administrative policies began to be assailed. The Congress and its line of action were highly complex problems which provoked debates at various levels. The political consciousness enkindled in the minds of the masses had nightmarish effect on the minds of the successive Viceroy in India. Old members of the Civil Service began resolving not to send their sons into what was once regarded as the "Heavenborn service". The steel frame did not after all seem capable of sustaining for the losing structure of the *Raj*. The Secretary of State, Peel wrote a dismal note to Reading explaining the fact that, '....But of course it is exceedingly difficult here to persuade young men of the best quality to enter these (Indian) services

and I feel more that this reluctance to enter the service would only increase unless we are able to make very material improvement in the position and prospects of the services .. But evidence that is continually coming before us of the position of the service in India (mainly in the Civil Service) is very serious.'

Spoor, a prominent member of the House of Commons pleaded for the Non-Cooperation Movement thus.<sup>32</sup> '....There was no attempt made, at all events in all that we have heard so far, to meet what some of us regard as the legitimate demands of the Indian people. It is extremely difficult for these of us who have been reared amid the purely materialistic philosophies of the West, to understand, even dimly, the reasoning of the Eastern mind...So it is that this non-cooperation movement is very largely misunderstood, by its Western critics, but we do not get over it by calling it fanatical. We certainly shall not suppress it by imprisoning a few thousands of its leaders. The prison has not yet been built that will enclose an idea for a very long; the gun is not forged yet that can destroy a will, however it may manifest itself, that is really making for freedom. I know that some people imagine that it may be possible to raise a dam that will hold the current in check: but the higher you raise your dam the greater becomes the pressure that is behind it. The great danger is that some day the dam will burst, as certainly some day in India the gaol doors will have to be opened.

'You are dealing the India with a terrible force and almost superhuman. The policy of blood and iron can no more bring peace in India that is brought peace in Ireland. It has never brought peace in any country in the world yet. You cannot defeat non-cooperation by it. Personally, I should like to see it defeated, but not by the methods that are being employed by the Government of India, backed by the British Government in this country. You can defeat non-cooperation by preaching cooperation. When I say that, I mean the willing, ungrudging cooperation of British and India on absolutely equal terms in the maintenance of a commonwealth jointly enjoyed.

'I do ask the Government really to make an attempt to face the real issue. Instead of trying to understand Gandhi we

put him in jail. Gandhi rightly understood is far less an isolated leader than the incarnation of what is undoubtedly the popular will. Whether we agree with him or not does not concern my argument, but through Gandhi the hope of millions of Indians are finding utterance. We may disagree with his ideas entirely, but it is a profound mistake to imagine that they are merely personal.

‘Unless there is a rapid change in the whole temper of the relations of Britain and India, will be lost to Britain and Britain will be lost to India, and on one can possibly imagine the magnitude of such a disaster as that.... I submit, further that the practical solution of the difficulty is not so terribly hard after all. India simply wants to be master in her own house, and until she is master in her won house there will be no peace.’<sup>33</sup>

The practicability of romantic Gandhian slogan promising ‘Swaraj in one year’ to the millions of people was not a glaring phenomenon in the early years of 1920s, when British imperialism could easily belie Indian political aspirations sponsored and supported by any leader of the time. The slogan, no doubt, was an effective Gandhian weapon to organize and mobilize people of different walks of life in cities, towns and villages, and helped him to seek their support under the flag of the Congress which considered that a great change was at the anvil in India in the near future. But when Gandhi very shrewdly put forward two preconditions before the people of India for the realization of this aim, it became fairly difficult to achieve the desired goal.

In an article entitled ‘The Crime of Chauri Chaura’, in *Young India*,<sup>34</sup> Gandhi explained cogent reasons for the suspension of the Non-Cooperation Movement. He stated. God has been abundantly kind to me. He has warned me the third time that there is not as yet in India that truthful and non-violent atmosphere which and which alone can justify mass disobedience which can be at all described as civil, which means gentle, truthful, humble, knowing, wilful yet loving, never criminal and hateful.

‘He warned me in 1919 when the Rowlatt Act agitation was started. Ahmedabad, Viramgam, and Kheda erred; Amritsar

and Kāsur erred. I retraced my steps, called it a Himalayan miscalculation, humbled myself before God and man, and stepped not merely mass civil disobedience but even my own which I knew was intended to be civil and non-violent.

The next time it was through the events of Bombay that God gave a terrific warning. He made me eye witness of the deeds of the Bombay mob on the 17th November. The mob acted in interest of non-cooperation. I announced my intention to stop the mass civil disobedience which was to be immediately started in Bordoli. The humiliation was greater than in 1919. But it did me good. I am sure that the nation gained by the stopping. India stood for truth and non-violence by the suspension.

But the bitters humiliation was still to come. Madras did give the warning, but I heeded it not. But God spoke clearly through Chauri Chaura. I understand that the constables who were so brutally hacked to death had given much provocation. They had even gone back upon the word just given by the Inspector that they would not be molested, but when the procession had passed the stragglers were interfered with and abused by the constables. The former cried for help. The mob returned. The constables opened fire. The little ammunition they had was exhausted and they retired to the Thora for safety. The mob, my informant tells me, therefore set fire to the Thana. The self-imprisoned constables had to come out for dear life and as they did so, they were hacked to pieces and the mangled remains were thrown into the raging flames...

The only virtue I want to claim is Truth and Non-violence. I lay no claim to superhuman powers. I want none. I wear the same corruptible flesh that the weakest of my fellow being wears and am, therefore as liable to err as any. My service have many limitations, but God has up to now blessed them in spite of the imperfections.

For confession of error is like a broom that sweeps away dirt and leaves the surface cleaner than before, I feel stronger for my confession. And the cause must prosper for retracing. Never has man reached his destination by persistence in deviation from the stringent path.

'Chauri Chaura is after all an aggravated symptom. I have never imagined that there has been no violence, mental or physical, in the places where repression is going on. Only I have believed. I still believe and the pages of *Young India* amply prove that the repression is out of all proportion to be insignificant popular violence is the areas of repression. The determined holding of meetings in prohibited areas I do not call violence. The violence I am referring to is the throwing of brickbats or intimidation and correction practised in stray cases. As a matter of fact, in civil disobedience there should be no excitement. Civil disobedience is a preparation for mute suffering. Its effect is marvellous though unappreciated and gentle. But I regarded a certain amount of excitement as inevitable, certain amount of unintended violence even pardonable, i.e., I did not consider civil disobedience impossible in somewhat imperfect conditions. Under perfect conditions disobedience when civil is hardly felt. But the present moment is admittedly a dangerous experiment under fairly adverse conditions.

'The tragedy of Chauri Chaura is really the index finger. It shows the India may easily go if drastic precautions be not taken. If we are not to evolve violence out of non-violence, it is quite clear that we must hastily retrace our steps and re-establish an atmosphere, of peace, re-arrange our programme and not think of starting mass civil disobedience still we are sure of peace being retained in spite of mass civil disobedience being started and in spite of Government provocation. He must be sure of unauthorized portions not starting mass civil disobedience.

'As it is, the Congress organization is still imperfect and its instructions are still perfunctorily carried out. We have not established Congress Committees in every one of the villages. Where we have, they are not perfectly amenable to our instructions. We have not probably more than one crore of members on the roll. We are in the middle of February, yet not many have paid the annual four anna subscription for the current year. Volunteers are indifferently enrolled. They do not confirm to all the conditions of their pledge, They do even wear hand-spun and hand-woven Khaddar All the Hindu Volunteers have not yet purged themselves of the sin of

untouchability. All are not free from the taint of violence. Not by their imprisonment are we going to win Swaraj or serve the holy cause of the Khilafat or attain the ability to stop payment to faithless servants. Some of us err in spite of ourselves. But some others among us sin sinfully. They join volunteer Corps well knowing that they are not and do not intend to remain non-violent. We are thus untruthful even as we hold the Government to be untruthful. We dare not enter the Kingdom of Liberty with mere lip homage to Truth and Non-violence.'

'Suspension of mass civil disobedience and subsistence of extitement are necessary for further progress, indeed indispensable to prevent further retrogression. I hope, therefore, that by suspension every Congressman or woman will not only feel disappointed but he or she will feel relieved of the burden of unreality and of national sin.'

The observance of strict discipline and non-violent behaviour from the millions of people of India in Northern, Southern, Western, Eastern and Central regions of the country were the pre-conditions of the typical Gandhian style of launching an anti-*Raj* movement. This kind of model placed before the nation was like something demanding a very high price on the political plane for achieving the highest political aim for a nation of about thirty crores of people. As it is evident, with the passage of time, this kind of model could not be maintained by the participants in the movement. The reasons were obvious. A huge country with its teeming millions professing different religions and creeds, engulfed with regional and local issue raised with the bureaucratic repression could not give what Gandhi wanted. Probably this kind of response from the masses was expected and a matured politician of Gandhi's stature knew it well that the Non-Cooperation Movement—the first of its kind in the history of India against the *Raj*. Was not to bring forth results spectacular in nature—a hope and promise give to the people during the movement. Instead he expected that this kind of agitation, a model which he had built up with the cooperation of the masses of India, would definitely be an eye-opener for the *Raj* which would not fail to recognize the great force, strength and power which Gandhi had gained with the mobilization of a huge number of followers in various regions of the country. The Congress



leadership was not unaware of the hard fact that the British rulers very firmly enchanted in the body politic of our country would not come to an agreement of any kind which would make them to leave the shores of India. It therefore, built up a scope for more non-violent agitational approach which he made use of in larger movements launched in 1930s and 1940s.

The movement sprouted new hopes and infused fire and zeal into the inert passive and demoralised people, and roused and galvanised them to put up a unique and epic struggle for their political emancipation. It breathed a new life into Indian nationalisms and engendered a new spirit of fearlessness and freedom in the people. It revoked a sense of self-sacrifice and suffering in the people who were hitherto largely politically apathetic.

The aftermath of the movement brought about a regular programme of social reforms in the society by the efforts of prominent leaders in various regions. The promotion of village industry with the introduction of *charkha* and *khadi*, the anti-untouchability measures, anti-drink propaganda, opening of *vidyapiths* and numerous such measures under the scheme of constructive programme, greatly benefited the impoverished Indian masses.

The movement greatly intensified the spirit of awakening amongst the people of India, earlier engendered in their hearts by prominent leaders like Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Pherozeshah Mehta, Bepin Chandra Pal, Lajpat Rai and others. The national consciousness was thus permeated in various sections of Indian society which unified them in order to prove themselves as an integrated force for political action on a larger scale in a few years. Evidently, the Non-Cooperation Movement shifted politics from the drawing rooms of the educated and in the businessmen to the huts in the countryside to the tillers of the soil.

It was the growing mass unrest among the peasants and industrial workers which brought about a change in the Congress attitude of cooperation in 1919 to non-cooperation in 1920. But once the non-cooperation began, it galvanised further the agrarian movement which received an impetus from the spirit of general defiance unleashed by the non-cooperation campaign

of 1920-22. The peasants discovered in the non-cooperation resolution of the Calcutta and Nagpur sessions of the Congress something useful for their own struggle. They began to take great interest in programme of non-payment of *panchayats* to settle their disputes was a point common to both the *Kisan Sabha* and the non-cooperation programmes. Jawaharlal Nehru saw behind the great national upheaval of 1921 the shadow of the 'agrarian trouble' and a rising 'working class movement.' For the time being, they overlapped and all pulled together under the banner of an 'Indian nationalism'.

The idea of jail-going as a volunteer without any kind of second thought in mind amongst thousands of Congressmen at the call of the Congress was a glaring phenomenon in this movement. Indeed, the hardships in jails were of no consequence to them and they made it a way of life to bear them with an expression tinged with spontaneous smile on their faces. Besides their release at a later stage afforded them love and respect by the members of Indian society.

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## CHAPTER : 3

# Emergence of Gandhi-II

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The emergence of Gandhi on the political scene of India in 1915 was the most significant phenomenon which became an unparalleled example in the long struggle for freedom. Earlier, as a young lawyer, he had a chequered political career in South Africa where he made himself instrumental in alleviating the pangs of Indians under which they suffered in numerous ways by the highly questionable laws of the land. Thus his stay was fairly prolonged there which meant about two decades—from 1893 to 1914. Some of his cherished work was completed in South Africa by 1914, and, thereafter, he wished to undertake some 'useful' work in his own country.

Gandhi landed in Bombay on 9 January 1915 when he was about forty-six years old. He had Gokhale's advice in mind not to plunge into any kind of hurried political programme for about a year and instead he was enjoined upon observing the Indian problems and the conditions thoroughly. Soon he planned to make himself well-conversant with the political, social, economic, cultural and religious level of the masses of India. Wherever, he went in his travels, multitudes from various walks of life thronged him 'to draw virtue from the sight of a saint'. He addressed numerous meetings, met and discussed the problems of the country with persons holding different shades of opinion. These speeches were fully reported and widely discussed. Above all, he made his presence felt in two annual sessions of Congress in Bombay and Lucknow in 1915 and 1916, although he took no prominent part in the deliberations. Besides it is quite clear from his diary for the year, reproduced in *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, volume XIII* which clearly shows that he happened to meet and exchange his views with well known personalities like Rabindranath Tagore, Swami Shradanand and others.

To give a concrete shape to his political programme of which he was not yet clear in his mind, he wished to maintain in the initial stages, the phoenix traditions and the ideal of a rigorous moral discipline, practised earlier at numerous occasions in South Africa. This find of model in his plan convinced him to open an *Ashram* in May 1915 at Kochrab, a small village on the outskirts of Ahmedabad. After sometime plague broke out and it became impossible to keep the inmates of the *Ashram* immune from the effects of the surrounding insanitation. 'Our ideal was to have the *Ashram* at a safe distance both from town and village, and yet at a manageable distance from either. And we were determined, some day, to settle on ground of our own. Ultimately a place near the Sabarmati Central Jail was chosen for the *Ashram*. Gandhi wrote, 'As jail-going was understood to be the normal lot of *satyagrahis*, I liked this position. And I knew that the sites selected for jails have generally clean surroundings. In about eight days the sale was executed. There was no building on the land and no tree. But its situation on the bank of the river and its solitude were great advantages. We decided to start by living under canvas, and having a tin shed for a kitchen till permanent houses were built. The *Ashram* had been slowly growing. We were now over forty souls, men, women and children, having our meals at a common kitchen. The whole conception about the removal was mine, the execution was a usual left to Maganlal'.

From the Sabarmati Ashram, Gandhi received much support in the implementation of his political programme in various movements launched after 1915. It is obvious that this *Ashram* was intended to be a centre for training for dedicated servants of the nation for different spheres of life—social, cultural, political, economic, religious and educational.

J.B. Kripalani has given a glimpse of his first impression of Mahatma Gandhi thus.<sup>1</sup> '...What struck me most was the intensity of his character. He appeared to be a man who could, if need, be stand above, provided he was convinced that the course of action he was following was the right one. He would not be deterred by the favours of friends or the frowns of opponents. I saw that Gandhiji was austere and puritanic. But he was not censorious. He denied himself many things.... His

non-violence was not negative. This was clear from the fact that he was friendly and cheerful and did not lack humour. He loved the poor and tried to live like them. His love for the poor...was deep and abiding. It manifested itself in appropriate conduct and action'.<sup>2</sup>

Gandhi 'allied himself to the British Government' because under it, was possible for him to claim equal partnership with all its subjects. 'I do not', how stated, 'belong to a subject race'. At that point of time, he was of opinion that the British rule might be faulty but it was 'not intolerable'. And how very well understood that the British Empire had certain ideals and one of them was that each of its subjects had the freest scope for his energy and honour and, whatever he thinks was due to his conscience. But Gandhi indeed was no 'lover' of any government and he always opined that government was best which governed least. He had, under the existing system, found that it was possible for him to be governed least under the British Empire. Hence his loyalty to the British Empire during the First World War was a glaring phenomenon.

Thus Gandhi was to explore new possibilities which were to fit in his political strategy tinged with the cult of non-violence. Save for too brief visits, he had been absent from India for about two decades. During this period, much had happened in various regions of the country mainly with the political activities of the well-knit and well-organised all-India party, viz., the Indian National Congress which, by this time, was three decades old. The country had 'suffered the impact of Lord Curzon's masterful personality.' Bengal had risen in revolt against its partition and an economic boycott was adopted against British goods by propagating the cult of *swadeshi*. Meanwhile Lord Morley had taken 'timid steps towards a limited form of self-government, and the slow process of industrialization was hastened by the war'.

The allegiance of politically conscious Hindus was divided at this time between the two veteran leaders, Gokhale and Tilak. Both were Brahmins of a peculiarly distinguished sub-caste. Both were descended from governing families of the Mahrattas who shared with the Sikhs military ascendancy over Northern and Central India in the early days of the

British conquest. Both were scholars, Tilak was a mathematician; Gokhale shone in the modern science of economics.... Tilak was a born fighter who believed in wresting freedom from the British by mobilizing a steadily growing pressure against them. A passionate orator, he was twice convicted of sedition, and served a sentence of six years' deportation. Gokhale, scrupulous in all he said and wrote, relied on persuasion....His aim, a rather distant goal, was 'colonial self-government'. Tilak was less patient over the pace and always spoke of 'Home Rule' which he hoped to get from parliament through a Bill on the Irish model. It was over methods that they differed. For Tilak, Gokhale's tactics of persuasion constituted 'mendicancy'. Gokhale was a liberal, a progressive and a rationalist. Tilak, an orthodox Hindu, idealized the past and stood, like Gandhi, on the defensive against westernization, but unlike him defended such social institutions as child-marriage'.<sup>3</sup> 'Gandhi regarded Gokhale as his *guru*-friend, teacher and father confessor. Tilak he honoured, but found him as unapproachable as a Himalayan peak'.

The Kheda *satyagraha* was indeed a pioneering experiment so far as the no-rent campaign was concerned. Gandhi, assisted by Vallabhbhai Patel, who, later on, described himself as a 'farmer and a weaver' and the Congress as organization representing the peasants of India, in fact made a starting point of a new kind of revolution in the country. Initiated, planned, organised and executed under the leadership of the urban leaders, it touched upon the peasantry in a very effective way. Its success in many ways created fear and awe in the bureaucracy which realized the efficacy of a mass *satyagraha*, though in a limited area of West India. Confined to one district only, the *satyagraha* did have much impact locally and, elsewhere, it clearly established the fact that the Gandhian technique of non-violent approach in this model was to awaken and activate the people of India in the rural areas. Besides the efficacy of local leadership, Gandhian leadership became a reality which became a dependable cover for the people so far as the future political movements were concerned.

During this time, Gandhi was the president of the Gujarat Sabha which sent petitions and telegrams to the government

and 'even patiently swallowed the insults and threats of the Commissioner. The conduct of the officials on this occasion was so 'ridiculous and undignified' as to be almost incredible now. From its headquarters at Nadiad Anathashram, the *satyagrahis* voluntarily signed the following pledge. 'Knowing that the crops of our village are less than four annas, we requested the Government to suspend the collection of revenue assessment till the ensuing year, but the Government has not acceded to our prayer. Therefore, we the undersigned, here by solemnly declare that we shall not, of our own accord, pay to the Government the full or the remaining revenue for the year. We shall let the Government take, whatever legal steps it may think fit and gladly suffer the consequences of our non-payment. We shall rather let our lands be forfeited than that by voluntary payment we should allow our case to be considered false or should compromise our self-respect. Should the Government, however, agree to suspend collection of the second instalment of the assessment throughout the district, such amongst us as are in position to pay will pay up the whole or the balance of the revenue that may be due. The reason why those who are able to pay still without payment is that, if they pay up, the poorer ryots may in a panic sell their cattels or incur debts to pay their dues, and here by bring suffering upon themselves. In these circumstances we feel that, for the sake of the poor, it is the duty even of those who can afford to pay to without payment of their assessment.

The campaign came to an unexpected end. It was clear that the people were exhausted, and I hesitated to let the unbending be driven to utter ruin. I was casting about for some graceful way of terminating the struggle which would be acceptable to a *Satyagrahi*. Such a one appeared quite unexpectedly. The *Mamlatdar* of the Nadiad *Taluka* sent me word that, if well-to-do *patidars* paid up, the poorer ones would be granted suspension. I asked for a written undertaking to that effect, which was given. But as a *Mamlatdar* could be responsible only for his *Taluka*, I inquired of the Collector, who alone could give an undertaking in respect of the whole district, whether the *Mamlatdar's* undertaking was true for the whole district. He replied that orders declaring suspension in terms



of the *Mamlatdar's* letter had been already issued. I was not aware of it, but if it was a fact, the people's pledge had been fulfilled. The pledge, it will be remembered, had the same thing for its object, and so we expressed ourselves satisfied with the orders.

'However, the end was far from making me feel happy, inasmuch as it lacked the grace with which the termination of every *Satyagraha* campaign ought to be accompanied. The Collector carried on as though he had done nothing by way of a settlement. The poor were to be granted suspension, but hardly any got the benefit of it. It was the people's right to determine who was poor, but they could not exercise it. I was sad that they had not the strength to exercise the right. Although, therefore, the termination was celebrated as a triumph of *Satyagraha*, I could not enthuse over it, as it lacked the essentials of a complete triumph.<sup>4</sup>

'The end of a *Satyagraha* campaign can be described as worthy, only when it leaves the *Satyagrahis* stronger and more spirited than they are in the beginning.

'The campaign was not, however, without its indirect results which we can see today and the benefit of which we are reaping. The Kheda *satyagraha* marks the beginning of an awakening among the peasants of Gujarat, the beginning of their true political education.

'Dr. Besant's brilliant Home Rule agitation had certainly touched the peasants, but it was the Kheda campaign that compelled the educated public workers to establish contact with the actual life of the peasants. They learnt to identify themselves with the latter. They found their proper sphere of work, their capacity for sacrifice increased. That Vallabhbhai found himself during this campaign was by itself no small achievement. We could realize its measure during the flood relief operations last year and the Bardoli *Satyagraha* this year. Public life in Gujarat became instinct with a new energy and a new vigour. The *Patidar* peasant came to an unforgettable consciousness of this strength. The lesson was indelibly imprinted on the public mind that the salvation of the people depends upon themselves, upon their capacity for suffering

and sacrifice. Through the Kheda campaign, *Satyagraha* took firm root in the soil of Gujarat.<sup>5</sup>

The inauguration of the Champaran *satyagraha* had a romantic setting. Earlier to it Gandhi had attended the Congress sessions in Bombay and Lucknow in 1915 and 1916, 'At these sessions he played a very inconspicuous part.' He moved a resolution on South Africa at the Lucknow session. But this presence there and the short speech had no impact worth consideration in political circles of the time.

Gandhi mentioned about Champaran thus in his *Autobiography*. I must confess that I did not then know even the name, much less the geographical position, of Champaran, and I had hardly any notion of indigo plantations. I had seen packets of indigo, but little dreamed that it was grown and manufactured in Champaran at great hardship to thousands of agriculturists.

'Rajkumar Shukla was one of the agriculturists who had been under this harrow, and he was filled with a passion to wash away the stain of indigo for the thousands who were suffering as he suffered.

'This man caught hold of me at Lucknow, where I had gone for the Congress of 1916.... Rajkumar Shukla of course wanted some help from the congress. Babu Brajkishore Prasad moved the resolution, expressing sympathy for the people of Champaran, and it was unanimously passed.

Rajkumar was glad, but far from satisfied. He wanted me personally to visit Champaran and witness the miseries of the ryots there. I told him that I would include Champaran in the tour which I had contemplated and give it a day or two. 'One day will be enough' said he, 'and you will see things with your own eyes'.<sup>6</sup>

Thus Gandhi's object was to inquire into the condition of the Champaran agriculturists and understand their grievances against the indigo planters. He reminisced. 'It should be remembered that no one knew me in Champaran. The peasants were all ignorant being far up north of the Ganges, and right at the foot of the Himalayas in close proximity to Nepal, was cut off from the rest of India. The Congress was practically

unknown in those parts. Even those who had heard the name of the Congress shrank from joining it or even mentioning it. And now the Congress and its members had entered this land, though not in the name of the Congress, yet in a far more real sense.<sup>7</sup>

The volunteers by their selfless voluntary work had endeared themselves amongst the people of Champaran. Numerous hazards were placed in their way by the planters and their well-wishers. So far as the planters tried their best to get Gandhi removed from Champaran and launched a systematic malicious propaganda against him personally and his mission.

The following committee was accordingly appointed with the approval of the Government of India. F.G. Sly was president; and other members were L.C. Adami, Raja Harihar Prasad Narayan Singh, D.J. Reid, G. Rainy and M.K. Gandhi. E.L. Tanner acted as secretary of the committee. The terms of reference of this committee were as follows. (a) To enquire into the relations between landlords and tenants in the Champaran district, including all disputes arising out of the manufacture and cultivation of indigo; (b) To examine the evidence on those subjects already available, supplementing it by such further inquiry, local and otherwise, as they may consider desirable. (c) To report their conclusions to government, stating the measures they recommend in order to remove any abuse or grievances which they might find to exist.<sup>8</sup>

The publication of the news of the committee created unprecedented stir among Anglo-Indian papers which began to level trenchant criticism against Mahatma Gandhi. The *Pioneer*, the *Statesman* and the *Englishman* voiced their feelings in the texts as well as in the editorials which were tantamount to the expression of dismissal of Gandhi from the committee and his expulsion from Champaran.

The following were the main clauses of the Report of the Champaran Agrarian Enquiry Committee. The *tinkathia* system, whether for growing indigo or any other crop, should be completely abolished; the agreement to be executed for growing indigo should be voluntary; the term of agreement should not exceed three years; the selection of field in which indigo is to

be grown, should rest with the ryots; the rate of sale of Indigo plants should be settled by the ryots according to their choice; the price of indigo plants should be paid on weight; in Motihari and Peepra concerns the enhancement should be reduced by 26 per cent and in Turkaulia concern by 20 per cent; in Jalaha and Sirni factories the encompassment would be reduced as in Motihari and Peepra; the ryots who have paid towan (either in cash or through hand notes) to the factories were to get back one-fourth of it from them; the realization of *abwab* was declared illegal and in future the ryots would not pay any amount to the zamindars in excess of what was entered in their Khatian or Record of Rights; it was declared illegal to realize any fee for mutation of name of an heir of a ryot; it was declared illegal to issue licence for selling kerosine oil and this system was abolished; it was declared illegal to impose and realize fines from the tenants; the labour was to be voluntary and the district board was required to keep management of the pounds as an experimental measure and not to lease them to factories or other lessees.<sup>9</sup>

The Champaran Agrarian Act received the assent of the Government of India on 1 May 1918. After the First World War, the prices of indigo dropped rapidly and the industry ceased to be of any importance and finally within a decade died out completely. Thus the *tinkathia* system which had been in existence for about a century was abolished and with it the 'planters' Swaraj came to an end and 'the superstition that the stain of indigo could never be washed out was exploded'.

The tenants could fully realize that through the efforts of Mahatma Gandhi their evil days were over and they could now sleep soundly in their homes and they could now shout with a full throat, *Mahatma Gandhi ki jai*.<sup>10</sup>

Gandhi attached much importance to the Champaran struggle that he once said, 'Those who would know my method of organizing Kisans may profitably study the movement in Champaran when *Satyagraha* was tried for the first time in India with the result all-India knows. It became a mass movement which remained wholly non-violent from start to finish. It affected over twenty lakhs of Kisans. The struggle centred round one specific grievance which was a century old.

There had been several violent revolts to get rid of the grievance, but they were suppressed. The non-violent remedy succeeded in full in six months. The Kisans of Champaran became politically conscious without any direct effort. The tangible proof they had of the working of non-violence to remove their grievance drew them to the Congress and they gave a good account of them selves during the civil disobedience campaign.<sup>11</sup>

It is something significant to know about Gandhi's working of mind which gives a truthful picture of his understanding about indigo and its plantation. He wrote, 'I had seen packets of Indigo but little dreamed that it was grown and manufactured in Champaran at great hardship to thousands of agriculturists'. Besides Gandhi's organization of the Champaran *satyagraha* and the success which he achieved with a novel method hitherto unpractised by any leader of the Congress, brought about remarkable success to practical ideology of the three-decade-old organization. 'The systematic on the spot study of the peasants' hardships, the resolute defiance of a foolish order, the transparent readiness to face imprisonment—it was all so different from the endless talk and high-sounding resolution of be the stack Indian politicians'. Gandhi also had the realization of the remarkable capacity and sincerity of thousands of impoverished workers who if organized properly for a course of action at an all-India level, could prove themselves as very effective and sueful tools fro lubricating the massive machinery in the from of an anti-*Raj* struggle which was yet to take a shape after a short span of two years.

Thus the emergence of Gandhi with his unprecedented successes in the initial stages changed the entire texture of the Non-Cooperation Movement, yet to be launched by the Mahatma after gaining more strength and power from well known provincial leaders and numerous voluntary workers for whom a pledge of discipline, non-violence and complete sacrifice for their motherland was essential at the time of the inauguration of the movement. Indeed Champaran and Ahmedabad were two most significant milestones in the career of Gandhi. Undoubtedly they are of pivotal importance in understanding his role in the freedom struggle during three decades ahead. Though earlier his role in South Africa was known only to the

limited educated class of India, Champaran demonstrated his capacity and sincerity as a social worker for alleviation of the deep-rooted pangs of the worst-affected innocent planters of Bihar. In fact it was his greatest personal achievement at a level which sowed the seeds of his becoming a leader of all-India fame in less than two years when he deeply involved himself to solve the problems facing Muslims and the Punjab where the administrative machinery functioning under a bureaucrat, Michael O'Dwyer, has taken a shape reminiscent of hydra-headed leviathan, supported by a senior army officers, Brigadier-General R.E.H. Dyer who thoughtlessly engineered a deathtrap in Jallianwala Bagh for hundreds of innocent uneducated rural populace which had traversed a long distance to reach Amritsar on the suspicious *Baisakhi* day without any kind of inkling to the fact that it would prove a dooms day either for them or their kith and kin or friends and neighbours.

The type of ghastly and gruesome traged perpetrated on more than three hundred persons was indeed an unprecedented phenomenon in the histroy of India. It was done by a senior army official who gave no serous thought to this inhuman action which he undertook to satisfy his personal whims and fancies. There had been fringes on meetings, processions and mobs earlier by the British bureaucracy in India, but this kind of tragic drama as was enacted on a peaceful assembly in Jallianwala Bagh was never heard of. The justification for firing put forward by General Dyer does not satisfy and impartial observer of the events at Amritsar.

Dyer gives an unconvincing reason to the fact that the mob which was considerable in number on account of the celebration of the *Baisakhi* day would have become unmanageable and would have overpowered him and his small force rendering him to be too late to control the critical situation in the city. This was simply a working of his mind which was not based on any kind of logic. Although about twenty thousand persons had gathered in the Jallianwala Bagh to hear the ecarlier story of the arrest and deportation of their two prominent leaders, Dr. Saifud Din Kitchlew and Dr. Satyapal and the misrule which was tantamount to various kinds of repressions and administrative lapses on the part of Michael O'Dwyer,

they would have dispersed peacefully in various parts of the city as well as to their respective villages from where they had come to Amritsar with the twin purpose of paying visit to the Golen Temple as well as showing their sense of unity, solidarity and patriotism.

The amount of ammunition used and the duration are highly questionable. Dyer used 1600 rounds and the firing continued for about ten minutes. The firing was done at low height so that it could be more effective, and its worst feature was that it stopped only when the ammunition was exhausted.

It is indeed unfortunate that on local civil official was consulted and taken into confidence in this kind of action by Dyer. A civil official is fully conversant with the political and other views of the people whom he administers. Miles Irving, the Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar, was not consulted before the firing in the *Bagh*.

The word Khilafat has been derived from Khalifa, a recognised title of the emperors of Turkey, who were the religious heads of the Islamic world. As a matter of fact, this title was not universally recognised. It is obvious that the Mughal Emperors of India never acknowledged this kind of religious headship. The Caliphate had almost ceased to exist and faced stiff opposition, at various levels, from European powers. So this kind of opposition which was tantamount to its decadence, was met with patronage by several Sultans who put in efforts for the revival of this institution. They, however, succeeded to the extent that colonial powers with large Muslim population felt embarrassed in engaging any kind of hostile activity against the Turks.<sup>12</sup>

The Turkish misfortune beginning with the Tripoli war and reaching ruinous dimensions with the peace treaty of the world war, undoubtedly created peculiar conditions. In 1918, the allies were riding on the wave of victory. Germany, badly defeated on all strategic fronts and losing hope of success in any sense, surrendered on 11 November and Turkey had capitulated on 31 October. The result was indeed ruinous for the latter The Ottoman Empire lay not only in bad shape but totally shattered The Arabs incited by the British revolted against their sovereign and Caliph,

The serious jolt and the set-back Turkey received with the Treaty of Sevres is quite obvious from the following clauses.<sup>13</sup> Turkey relinquished all rights over Egypt and the Sudan and Cyprus; it recognised the French protectorate over Morocco and Tunisia and it relinquished her claims to some islands in the Aegean. Besides, the control was to be maintained over the finances of Turkey until the discharge of her international obligations had been assured. The following ports were declared international ports and provision was to be made for free zones in each: Alexandria, Busrah, Haief, Hailad Pasha, Smyrna and Trebizond.

The publication of the clauses of the Treaty of Sevres greatly aggravated the Muslim discontent. In fact, Turkey had been denied the leniency or any kind of territorial concession for which Indian Muslims had been hoping and agitating. Gandhi rightly commented. 'The Turkish terms are admittedly a staggering blow to the Indian Mussalmans.... There is no sacred character about the peace terms. They are capable of being revised.'<sup>14</sup> The Viceroy, however, spent sometime to placate the much injured feelings of the Muslims. He conveyed the decision of the Supreme Council of the Allies in respect of the peace settlement with Turkey thus, 'They have been reached after the most careful and anxious consideration of representations from the Muslims of all countries... These decisions are in full accordance with the high principles which have been applied in peace settlement with all other Powers lately at war with Britain and her allies.'<sup>15</sup>

These views of the Viceroy were not to placate the anger and dissatisfaction lurking in the minds of the Muslims. The support, in every way, by the Hindus was an encouraging phenomenon. During the First World War, Hindus and Muslims had demonstrated complete unity which grew stronger in the post-war period and the readiness of Hindus to make common cause with Muslims was not surprising. The Indian Muslims were great conflict in their minds, for the war had created a serious religious dilemma for them. As subjects of Britain, they owed loyalty to the government which had allowed them freedom of belief and worship, but in deference to their tradition, they were bound to obey the Caliph who was the religious head of the Muslim community.



The case of the Muslims was based on the pledges which the British Prime Ministers, Asquith and Lloyd George and the British Viceroy Lord Hardinge had give about the holy places; the assurances for the integrity of the Turkish dominion and independence of Muslim territories. But all these assurances and commitments proved to be irrelevant when they had ruthlessly brushed them aside during and after the First World War.<sup>16</sup>

At this point of time Gandhi felt much concerned about the Khilafat issue. With the passage of time, Gandhi became much critical of the British action in connection with the Khilafat and advised the Hindus and Muslims not to take rest until the problem of Khilafat was solved. He was critical of the speech of the Viceroy which he delivered at the time of the opening of the Legislative Council where he talked about the issue of Khilafat along with other political and economic problems. Gandhi wrote in *Young India*, 'It is not truthful to saddle responsibility for the Terms on the allied Powers when Great Britain alone has promoted them. The offence of the Viceroy becomes greater when we remember that he admits the justness of the Muslim claim.'<sup>17</sup>

Gandhi explained thus: 'This is no ordinary problem. The problem of the Turkish Empire involves a serious issue for Islam. The Turkish Sultan is himself the holy Khalifa of Islam, and if the Sultanate disappears, the according to the Muslim faith, the Khalifat will lose all meaning, so strict are the injunctions of the Koran. Hence this has become a serious religious issue for the Muslim nations.'<sup>18</sup>

The anxiety of the cause of Khilafat was expressed in a meeting of Muslims in Bombay on 18 September 1919. In a huge gathering at the local Juma Masjid the prominent Muslims expressed the greatest anxiety over the threatened dismemberment of Turkey and the removal of the Holy places of Islam from the Caliph's control and trusted that his Majesty's ministers would secure fulfilment of the pledged word of the Rt. Hon'able Lloyd George regarding Turkey and thereby restore the confidence of the Muslims.<sup>19</sup>

Indeed Gandhi was very critical of the functioning of British administration in India and Britain. His criticism was

aglore in an article entitled 'Prayer and Fasting' published in the issue of the *Young India* dated 4 October 1919. '...if justice cannot be obtained for Turkey, Montagu and Lord Chelmsford must resign...it is the bounden duty of the Hindus and other religious denominations to associate themselves with their Mohammedan brethren. It is the surest and simplest method of bringing about the Hindu-Mohammedan unity.... Let millions of Hindus show to the Mohammedans that they are one with them in sorrow.

'I would respectfully urge the Government to make common cause with the people and encourage and regulate his peaceful exhibition of their feelings. Let the people not think that Government will put any obstacles directly or indirectly in their way.'<sup>20</sup>

In another speech on the same theme, Gandhi gave assurance of support and cooperation to the Muslims by his correlative religionists. 'It is a great Empire question....I know that with you Khilafat is all in all today. I am sure, therefore that you have the whole of the Hindu with you in this your just struggle.'<sup>21</sup>

Besides, the Khilafat conference held at Lucknow in the second week of October 1919 unanimously decided to observe 17 October as a day of fasting and prayer at an all-India level. Gandhi who was at the Sabarmati Ashram at the moment, sent a brief appeal to the press to support the cause of Khilafat. 'I hope that every Hindu, man and woman, will observe the 17th instant and thus put a sacred seal on the Hindu-Mohammedan bond.'<sup>22</sup>

Gandhi, in fact, was much concerned about the partition of Turkey and opposed this move on numerous counts. He knew well that '....if Turkey is partitioned, the Khilafat will disappear. If the Khilafat disappears, Islam will lose its vitality.'<sup>23</sup>

At a Khilafat conference held in Delhi on 24 November 1919, he enthusiastically declared before a huge audience.<sup>24</sup> 'It is our duty to demonstrate to the British people, the king and responsible ministers that we regard the sentiments of Mussalmans with respect and consider their cause just. It is not right that eight crore Mussalmans should have to face

mental torment. They are in the right and they should be helped. On 17th. October the whole of India excepting the Punjab observed a fast and *hartal* and prayed. But this will not be adequate. The Khilafat question is a very big one and it belongs to the whole of India....Let me here tell Indians not to despair. Despondence robs one of all energy...we are under the shadow of a calamity. Where is peace? I do not see it.

....If Alsace and Lorraine were not resoted to France, there would be no peace for France. Similarly, Indians could say that so long as eight crore Indian Muslims were not relieved of their angusih regarding the Khilafat question, Indians could have nothing to do with celebrations. If, however, that question were satisfactory settled, all Indians would spontaneously and respectfully join the rejoicing.

'You have to be active to achieve something. You have to read the *Gita*, the *Quran* and the *Bible* and Zend to go to Paradise.... Don't forget that the sword alone does not kill, but words can do the same. You should be violent neither in deeds nor even in words.'<sup>25</sup>

In Khilafat Conference in Delhi on 3 November 1919, he delivered a speech and expressed his feelings thus: 'How can twenty-two crore Hindus have peace and happiness, if eight crores of their Muslim brethren are torn in anguish? The pain of eight crores is also the pain of the other twenty-two crore inhabitants of India; therefore, although peace has been concluded, India has not known any real peace.'<sup>26</sup>

It is a curious phenomenon to observe that the frustration in the minds of the Muslims started with the non-fulfilment of various pledges which the British governmental had given during the war. The scanty regard shown by the Government for the Muslim sentiments over issues like the partition of Bengal, the Aligarh Muslim University and Kanpur mosque episode left the Muslims disillusioned and hurt'.<sup>27</sup> The Muslim middle class was much interested and concerned about the developments in the Muslim countries of the Middle East and felt much injured in their sentiments by what seemed to it a conspiracy of Christendom against Islam. The British control over Egypt, the Anglo-French entente on Morocco, the Anglo-Russian deal for dividing spheres of influence in Persia, the

Italian invasion of Tripoli and the dismemberment of the Turkish Empire were seen as manifestations of a common peril.

Besides, the discontent of the Muslim middle class found eloquent expression in the renowned poems of Iqbal and Shibli and also in brilliant articles by two well known journalists and public men, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Maulana Mohamed Ali. Indeed Mohamed Ali was utterly disgusted with the treatment Muslims received at the hands of the British. He regretted, "The pledge has been broken both in letter and spirit. ....It would be hard to discover in history a more ignoble instance of betrayal in which "loyalty" has been rewarded with deprivation of recently recovered rights, and contentment has been punished as the worst of crimes.

'It was a curious but nonetheless significant political phenomenon, with highly charged spiritual overtones relating to the Caliphate, the highest religious office in the Islamic World.... The result was the creation of a powerful politico-religious movement headed by the Ali brothers—Mohamed and Shaukat <sup>28</sup>

The Caliph was thought to be the vice-regent of God. Maulana Mohamed Ali while sincerely advocating the doctrine of Pan-Islamism thought that the doctrine was an assertion of the supremacy of Islam. The adherence to Islam demands the religious unity of its followers, transcending all territorial and other considerations. The chief aim of Pan-Islamism since Jamaluddin Afghani had been the unification of all-Muslim people under one Islamic Government, over which the Supreme Caliph should bear undisputed rule, as in the glorious days of Islam

The Khilafat Committee met in Bombay to deliberate upon Gandhi's non-cooperation project and adopted it on 28 May 1920 as the only means now left to the Muslims. On 30 May the A. I. C. C. met at Benares to discuss the Hunter Report and the Turkish peace terms and, after a long debate decided to hold a special session to consider the question of non-cooperation. On 30 June 1920, there was a joint Hindu-Muslim conference at Allahabad regarding the Khilafat question, and the non-cooperation was unanimously adopted to be resorted to after a month's notice to the Viceroy. Besides, numerous

meeting of all parties were held in the different parts of the country, strongly condemning the Hunter Report and demanding justice regarding the Punjab and the Khilafat.

The deputation of prominent Muslims which was headed by Maulana Mohamed Ali was received by Fischer on behalf of the Secretary of State and it also waited upon the Prime Minister. It further requested permission to place its views before the Supreme Council of the Peace Conference but was refused. While the deputation was still in Europe, the proposed terms of peace with Turkey were made public on 14 May 1920, and in India, they were accompanied with a message from the Viceroy to the Muslims of Indian, explaining those terms.

The Secretary of State informed the Viceroy on 21 March 1920: 'Khilafat deputation was received by Prime Minister on March 19th.... Mohamed Ali in opening stated deputation had come on a religious question. Islam drew no distinction between spiritual and temporal affairs....for defence of faithful Khilafat must retain adequate territories, resources, etc. which may be summed up in expression temporal power'.<sup>29</sup> He again informed Lord Chelmsford on 1 April 1920,<sup>30</sup> ....Mohamed Ali has done us a lot of harm here by the extreme nature of his demands—demands which are obviously put forward in the knowledge that they cannot be met, this fight over the Turkish Treaty, only partially successful, has been the most anxious and onerous of all the troubles that I have had to deal with all through... I cannot understand the motives which animate people in attempting a diplomacy which they have not the force of arms to insist upon, and if we are in for a serious trouble, you and I will know that we have done everything that we possibly could in the cause of the Empire! He called, Mohamed Ali,.... a quite typical specimen, full of his incurable vanity.<sup>31</sup>

The Viceroy expressed his concern in his telegram to Secretary of State on 25 February 1920: 'In session of 18th February the All India Khilafat Conference at Bombay resolved to appeal for funds to extent of thirty lakhs for deputation to Europe of Khilafat propaganda. Bengal and Sind have promised five lakhs each while the United Provinces are expected to raise four lakhs and Bombay promised eleven lakhs at the meeting'.<sup>32</sup>

After four months the Viceroy stated in a telegram: 'A manifesto has been published by the non-cooperation subcommittee appointed by the Central Khilafat Committee at its special meeting at Allahabad indicating plan of action. The committee recommended boycott of councils, schools, surrender of titles, non-participation in government functions, promotion of Swadeshi and to refrain from government service.'<sup>33</sup>

On 22 June 1920, a message signed by a number of Muslim leaders was submitted to the Viceroy, asking him to secure revision of the Turkish peace terms and, in the event of the British cabinet failing to comply with the Muslim wishes they would make it common cause with the Indian Muslims. It further warned him that, if he failed to adopt the suggestion, they would be obliged from the 1st August 1920 following to withdraw cooperation from the government and to ask other Muslims and Hindus to do likewise.

By the middle of 1920, Mahatma Gandhi's alienation from the British *Raj* was complete. The impact of the Treaty of Sevres with the helpless and defeated Turkey and the Hunter Committee Report had clearly revealed the fact that there could be no possibility of the change of heart in the official world at any rate. Besides the 'danger was that the pent-up Muslim frustration might burst the dykes and turn into violent channels.' Gandhi preached during this period and also afterwards that Hindus and Muslims were members of one nation and their unity was considered to be the most essential to achieve the main political aim, viz. The true Home Rule. To achieve this end, he had contacted Muslim leaders and addressed Muslim League meetings at numerous places. The result was that they pledged to help Gandhi by their full support in the Non-Cooperation Movement.

The commencement of the Khilafat agitation marked a definite change in the political attitude of the Muslims in their relation to the British *Raj* and the leadership of the Indian National Congress. The kind of loyalty and the attitude of cooperation shown by Muslims towards the *Raj* earlier were no more visible and a joint front came into existence with the voluntary cooperation and friendly attitude of the Congress. This new stance had made the agitation a mass movement

forgetting the religious and political differences which the two communities had on one issue or the other.

'Gandhi's main objective for his *satyagraha* was the creation of a mass force. He believed that mass mobilisation in India depended on Hindu-Muslim unity. Thus he saw the Khilafat cause as offering a great opportunity for uniting the two communities into a single mass movement'.<sup>34</sup> Thus Gandhi opened a new chapter in Indian history; it was the chapter with which began the combined attack of Hindus and Muslims on the British authority.

Though the Khilafat and Congress worked simultaneously on non-cooperation, their organization, volunteer cadres and funds always remained distinct....At first most of their financing came from wealthy donors like Chotani, Fazilbhai Currimbhai of Bombay and Haji Abdullah Harun of Karachi. ...One technique used together small donations was for tea stall owners to assign their profits on certain days to Khilafat fund. Another was the sale of Khilafat receipts. They were in one rupee, five-rupees and ten-rupees denominations. ...There receipts were tremendously popular and were sold extensively during fund raising drives....<sup>35</sup>

Gandhi's style of launching a political movement was indeed a novel phenomenon in the freedom struggle. If once he was convinced that a particular line of action was correct, possible and feasible, he would at once adopt it without giving any second thought to it and put it into practice. He did not mind even if he was alone. In his case, he was clear in his mind to vindicate the honour of Islam, thus affording the maximum support to Indian Muslims from his personally and from the numerous workers functioning under the banner of the Indian National Congress. But he, however, could not visualise the glaring fact that the Khilafat was a moribund institution; he also failed to see the Turks themselves were sick of it and the survival of the Ottoman Empire was in a serious jeopardy at the end of the First World War. The other fact was that the adjoining small nations, both Arabs and non-Arabs, had adopted a mood of defiance and had launched a struggle to attain freedom from the stranglehold of Turkey.

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## CHAPTER : 4

# The Gandhian Technique

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Gandhi who did not conceal his political strategy and doings having deep linkage with the movement, explained thus in *Young India* on 26 January 1921: 'I am individually working for self-rule pictured therein. But today my corporate activity is undoubtedly devoted to the attainment of Parliament by *Swaraj* in accordance with the wishes of the people of India. I am not aiming at destroying railways or hospitals, though I would welcome their natural destruction. Nor am I aiming at a permanent destruction of the law courts much as I regard it as a consummation devoutly to be wished for.'<sup>1</sup>

The model of non-violent *satyagraha* indeed was potent legacy which Gandhi left for the people of India. It is also the key to his political philosophy. With its application, he wished to solve pressing and complex problems facing the masses i.e. social, political and economic problems.

Obviously, Gandhi did not like to take advantage of the helpless position of the government. The *satyagraha* or the non-violent agitation was to be launched in normal circumstances so that he could argue his case well and in a disciplined manner. Huttenback stated:<sup>2</sup> The *satyagraha* struggle was still not officially over when Gandhi, accompanied by Andrews, travelled to Pretoria to see Smuts. It was January 9, 1914, and a railways strike was looming on the horizon. As was his custom, Gandhi was not at all anxious to take advantage of the government's embarrassment, and he promised that *satyagraha* would be suspended, at least until the strike was settled.

'In my opinion, the beauty and efficacy of *satyagraha* are so great and the doctrine so simple that it can be preached even to children. It was preached by me to thousands of men, women and children commonly called indentured Indians with excellent results.

The spirit of non-violence necessarily leads to humility. Non-violence means reliance on God, the Rock of Ages. If we would seek His aid, we must approach him with a humble and a contrite heart. Non-co-operationists may not trade upon their amazing success at the Congress. We must act, even as the mango tree which droops as it bears fruit. Its grandeur lies in its majestic lowliness.

Non-co-operation is not a movement of brag, bluster, or bluff. It is a test of our sincerity. It requires solid and silent self-sacrifice. It challenges our honesty and our capacity for national work. It is a movement that aims at translating ideas into action. And the more we do, the more we find that much more must be done than we had expected. And this thought of our imperfection must make us humble.<sup>3</sup>

Gandhi published a brief article on 30 September 1905 in connection with the Chinese boycott. He stated that the boycott had already cost the Americans £ 5,00,000, 'In all this commotion one thing stands out clear, namely, that where is unity, there alone is strength, and also victory. This deserves to be carefully borne in mind by every Indian. The Chinese, though weak, appear to have become strong on account of their unity, thereby bearing out the truth of the Gujrati verse, "Thus do ants when united take the life of a fierce snake."<sup>4</sup>

Gandhi indeed did not fail to miss an opportunity of emphasising the fact that action of political nature was most significant aspect of the total regeneration of national life to which the people should direct their efforts. In the early months of 1920, he made up his mind to join the All-India Home Rule League and thus yielded to the persuasion of numerous friends. Not only that: he even accepted the position of a president in that organization.

Etymologically, the term *satyagraha* means passion for, or firmness in truth. The term was coined by Gandhi in 1906 during his political movement in South Africa. He considered it essential to give a new name for his movement for the first time. Through his journal *Indian Opinion*, he offered a small prize for the best suggestion for a new name. One of the contestants suggested the word *sadagraha* and won the prize, but Gandhi modified it as *satyagraha*, as he thought the latter

term expressed his idea better. He was greatly influenced by the Plebeian scissions of Rome, involving non-co-operation and mass migration; the life of Jesus, the early Christians who laid down their lives, both individually and collectively, in defence of their faith; Tolstoy and Thoreau.

While discussing the origins of *satyagraha* with Doke, Gandhi opined, 'I remember how one verse of a Gujarati poet which as a child, I learned at school, cling to me. In substance it was this:

If a man gives you a drink of water  
and you give him a drink in return,  
that is nothing. Real beauty consists  
in doing good against evil.

Gandhi's campaigns in South Africa and his conceptions of appropriate means of struggle were influenced by some other cases of non-violent resistance and revolution, including events which brought about political changes, in China, Russia, South Africa and India. Such cases during this period were the Chinese boycott of American goods against United States, anti-Chinese legislation, the Russian Revolution in 1905 and the boycott movement in Bengal against the partition in the same year. In fact Gandhi first referred to the Chinese boycott in his *Indian Opinion* on 19 August 1905 in an article which dealt with the theme of the Petition of Bengal. Gandhi stated '.... But if the people really act accordingly, there would be nothing surprising if our troubles come to a speedy end. For, if this is done, Great Britain will be put to great loss; and the Government can have no means of dealing with it. They cannot compel the people to carry on trade. The method is very straight and simple. But will our people in Bengal maintain the requisite unity? Will the merchants suffer for the good of the country? If we can answer both these questions in the affirmative. India can be said to have truly woken up.'<sup>5</sup>

The Irish model of boycott practised under the leadership of Thomas Parnell who had rent strikes and tax refusals from 1879-86, did shape the original opinion of Gandhi. The term 'boycott' had its origin from a well known case of non-cooperation by Irish peasants with one Captain Boycott in 1880. 'He (Gandhi) began to take keen interest in current events. The struggle for

Irish Home Rule was in full swing. Parnellism had touched the high-water mark of its success. He studiously followed from day to day the proceedings of the Commission on Irish crimes and Lord Russell's brilliant cross-examination that exposed the pigott letters as clumsy forgeries and vindicated Parnell'.<sup>6</sup> It is thus evident that Gandhi and other Indian leaders evinced interest in the political developments in Ireland and Parnell, their leader, was referred to as a model of such an action.<sup>7</sup>

The Russian Revolution in 1905 was predominantly, though not completely nonviolent. In the issue of the *Indian Opinion* dated 11 November 1905, Gandhi opined, 'The present unrest in Russia has a great lesson for us'. Calling the Czar as the most autocratic ruler in world, he recounted the unbearable suffering of the common people of Russia who had now reached the limit of their patience. This time they have found another remedy which, though very simple, is more powerful than rebellion and murder. The Russian workers and all the other servants declared a general strike and stopped all work. They left their jobs and informed the Czar that, unless justice was done, they would not resume work. What was there even the Czar could do against this? It was quite impossible to exact work from people by force. It is not within the power of even the Czar of Russia to force strikers to return at the point of the bayonet.<sup>8</sup> Significantly, he compared the conditions of India and Russia and opined, 'We too, can resort to the Russian remedy against tyranny... Our shackles will break this very day, if the people of India become united and patient, love their country, and think of the well-being of their motherland disregarding their self-interest. The Government of India is possible only because there exist people who serve. We also can show the same strength that the Russian people have done.'<sup>9</sup>

'Since 1915, and particularly since 1919, there has also been growing a movement to eliminate war. Before the last war the War Resisters' International of which the Peace Pledge Union was the British section, extended practically into all the countries of the world. The schemes of peace organizations centred on five fundamentals: arbitration and arbitration treaties, an international authority, codification of international law, sanctions, and disarmament. Comprehensive anti-war propaganda was conducted by peace societies, though there was

a lack of agreement among them on defensive war and on the place on non-violence in personal life. It is significant that the establishment of the League of Nations was taken as the fulfilment of many of the aspirations of the peace movement. The present international situation is ample evidence that wars between nations, against which the peace movement has been crusading, cannot be eliminated unless efforts are also made to banish violence from our individual and group life.<sup>10</sup>

Beside liberating India, non-violence has exerted tremendous influence on the people. 'It (*satyagraha*) has brought about, Gandhi observes, 'an awakening' among the masses which would probably have taken generations otherwise... It has removed to a large extent the moral and psychological effects of centuries of political subjection and has given to the people a consciousness of their strength to defy physical might and of their capacity for concerted action. The people have regained self-confidence and self-reliance and developed a sense of solidarity. They have come to believe that the redress of their grievances depends on their own moral strength born of sacrifices. *Satyagraha* has also destroyed their traditional political passivity, drawing them into national politics. One indication of the wide-spread political consciousness was the rapidly increasing response of the people to Gandhi's call for sacrifice. Another tribute to the morale the people as well as the method of non-violence is the rapid recovery of the Congress after the repression of 1932-34 and 1943-44.<sup>11</sup>

In his speeches and writings, Gandhi clarified quite unequivocally the grant of *swaraj* to the people of India within one year. This kind of assurance with a practical framework of his political ideology during this period had turned numerous persons, irrespective of their caste, colour, creed and profession, Gandhians. The ferment was seen at work in every grade of society. Not only the notable lawyers, doctors, professors, government servants and legislators resigned their positions, government servants and legislators resigned their positions and abandoned their work, the well-to-do women donned *Khaddar* and illiterate villagers began wearing Gandhi caps. The feelings of the people had been clustered towards one goal that a new era was about to dawn.

Subhās Chandra Bose was also critical of the idea of *Swaraj* spelt out by Gandhi. In his *Indian Struggle*<sup>12</sup> he stated thus: 'The promise of *Swaraj* within a year was not only unwise but childish'. But in '*Hind Swaraj*' Gandhi gave an explanation in connection with the simple method of achieving home rule for India. He wrote, 'If man will only realize that it is unmanly to obey laws that are unjust, no man's tyranny will enslave him. This is the key to self-rule or home rule.'<sup>13</sup> The success of the Gandhian movement lies in the fact that it could fulfil its initial objective which aimed at mass mobilisation. For the first time in the history of India the masses were mobilised, organized and apprised of their rights and duties; a new spirit of self-sacrifice and fearlessness was enkindled in the hearts of the masses and a new political aim with a novel political ideology was enshrined in the hearts of the people of India.

In this movement, numerous persons reacted to the call of Gandhi with 'a mixture of religious adulation and millenary anticipation.' A common feeling had been injected in the minds of the people that if Gandhi succeeded in ousting the British from the Indian soil, it would usher into a regime in which much of the hardship and distress would end. In this regard, Ronaldshay informed Reading on 3 February 1922, 'The people are still almost entirely concerned with the prices of food, jute and cloth. They are interested only in politics connected with the name of Gandhi as so many of them believe that *Swaraj* means cheap food and clothing.'<sup>14</sup> Besides, people in the villages had the feeling that Gandhi *Raj* had come and that there was no longer any necessity to pay anything to any body. They were, therefore, not only refusing to pay rent and taxes but were repudiating their debts.<sup>15</sup>

Gandhi was greatly influenced by John Ruskin, the son of a wine merchant. By faith an evangelist, his thoughts were soaked in the concept of love for humanity, charity, humility and simplicity, and he preached with the ardent fervour of a devoted prophet. A follower of Carlyle, he was fully conscious of the havoc and ruinous effects wrought by materialism and the concept of *laissez faire*. He deprecated the Victorian industrial economy and his entire social theory is based on the

relationship between labour and life. His strong recommendation was for the worship of Toil and he advised people to seek not 'greater wealth' but simpler pleasure; not higher fortune but deeper felicity; making the first of possessions, self-possession and honouring themselves in the harmless pride and calm pursuits of peace.<sup>16</sup>

It was Polak who took the initiative of presenting Ruskin's *Unto This Last* to Gandhi whose working of mind was gripped by the theme it contained. Gandhi wrote in *Autobiography* thus: '... I had taken Mr. Polak into my fullest confidence. He came to see me off at the station, and left with me a book to read during the journey, which he said I was sure to like. It was Ruskin's *Unto This Last*.

'The book was impossible to lay aside, once I had begun it. It gripped me.... I could not get any sleep that night I determent to change my life in accordance with the ideals of the book. This was the first book of Ruskin I had ever read.... Of these books the one that brought about an instantaneous and practical transformation in my life was *Un to this Last*. I translated it later into Gujarati entitling into *Sarvodaya* (the welfare of all). I believe that I discovered some of my deepest convictions reflected in this great book of Ruskin, and that is why it so captured me and made me transform my life.<sup>17</sup>

It is evident from writings of Ruskin that he does not describe the cult of non-violence or its application, but he does mention about other principles which has much relevance with the day-to-day functioning of human beings. Later on, when Gandhi understood, modified and adopted Ruskin's principles, it became quite clear that both preached truth, nobleness of human nature, chastity of character, nobility in politics, regeneration of society, discouragement of machinery in preference to handwork, and last but not the least, the upliftment of hard-pressed and down-trodden in the society.

Another great writer who influenced Gandhi to mould his political philosophy in practical channels was Leo Tolstoy. Gandhi described himself as 'a humble follower' to Tolstoy.<sup>18</sup> In the preface of 'The Kingdom of God is Within You', he made it clear that the chief omission of the Church doctrine is its failure to acknowledge the law of non-resistance to evil by



violence. 'The Kingdom of God', he wrote, 'is attained by... sacrificing outward circumstances for the sake of truth.'

Tolstoy had much appreciation for Gandhi's *satyagraha* campaign in South Africa. Describing Gandhi's fight 'between gentleness and brutality, between humility and love on one side and conceit and violence on the other hand,' he communicated with him thus: You work in Transvaal which seems to be far away from the centre of our world is yet the most fundamental and important to us, supplying the most weighty and practical proof in which participate not only the Christians but all the people of the world', Gandhi himself admitted that, 'next to the late Rajachandra, Tolstoy is one of the three moderns who have exerted the greatest spiritual influence in my life, the third being Ruskin'.<sup>19</sup>

Undoubtedly, both Gandhi and Tolstoy advocated simplicity of life, purity of means, search for truth, opposition to violent methods and reform of the individual for his all-round development. Both were quite agreeable in their interpretations of non-violent means to achieve social regeneration for human beings.

Tolstoyan non-violence is rooted in the conception that it is crime to impose one's will on any creature, to force it in any way. To quote from Tolstoy's famous letter to Gandhi, dated Kocheti, September 7, 1910<sup>20</sup>. In reality, as soon as force was admitted into love it was no more, and there could be no love as the law of life, and as there was no law of life, there was no law at all except violence—i.e. The power of the strongest. So lived Christian humanity for nineteen centuries. It is true that in all times people were guided by violence in arranging their lives. The difference between the Christian nations and all other nations is only that in the Christian world the law of love was expressed clearly and definitely, whereas it was so expressed in ten religious teaching, and that the people of the Christian world have solemnly accepted this law, whilst at the same time they have permitted violence, and built their lives on violence, and that is why the whole life of the Christian people is a continuous contradiction between that which they profess and the principles on which they order their lives—a contradiction between love accepted as the law of life and violence which is recognized and praised, acknowledged even as a necessity in different phases of life: such as the power of the rulers, courts

and armies. This contradiction always grew with the development of the people of the Christian world, and lately it reached the highest stage. The question now evidently stands thus: either to admit that we do not recognize any religious teaching, and we guide ourselves in arranging our lives only by power of the stronger, or that all our compulsory taxes, court and police establishments, but mainly our armies, must be abolished.

'Socialism, Communism, Anarchism, Salvation Army, increasing crime, unemployment, the growing insane luxury of the rich and misery of the poor, the alarmingly increasing number of suicides—all these are the signs of that internal contradiction which must be solved and cannot remain unsolved. And of course solved in the sense of acknowledging the law of love and denying violence. And so your activity in the Transvaal, as it seems to us, at the end of the world, is the most essential work, the most important of all the work now being done in the world, and in which not only the nations of Christians, but of all the world, will unavoidably take part.

'In acknowledging Christianity, even in the corrupt form in which it is professed amongst the Christian nations and at the same time in acknowledging the necessity of armies and armament for killing on the greatest scale in wars, there is such a clear clamouring contradiction, that it must sooner or later, possibly very soon, inevitably reveal itself, and annihilate either the professing of the Christian religion which is indispensable in keeping up these forces or the existence of armies and all the violence kept up by them, which is not less necessary for power. This contradiction is felt by all governments, by your British as well as by our Russian Government, and out of a general feeling of self-preservation the persecution by them (as seen in Russia and in the journal sent by you) against such anti-government activity as those above-mentioned, is carried on with more energy than against any other form of opposition. The governments know where their chief danger lies, and they vigilantly guard in this question, not only their interests, but the question: To be or not to be?'

In his introduction to an edition of Tolstoy's essay, Gandhi wrote in Johannesburg in 1909. '...Tolstoy indicates it. 'Do not resist evil, but also do not yourselves participate in evil—in the

violent deeds of the administration of the law courts, the collection of taxes, and what is more important, on the soldiers, and no one in the world will enslave you, passionately declares the sage of Yasnaya Polyana [Tolstoy's home]. Who can doubt the truth of what he says in the following: A commercial company enslaved a nation comprising two hundred millions. Tell this to a man free from superstition and he will fail to grasp what these words mean. What does it mean that thirty thousand people, not athletes, but rather weal and ordinary people, have enslaved two hundred millions of vigorous, clever, capable, freedom-loving people? Do not the figures make it clear not the English, but the Indians, have enslaved themselves?'<sup>21</sup>

Yet another great writer who influenced Gandhi was Henry David Thoreau. His two major works *Walden* and *A week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* rebelled against the artificial ways seeped into the society. His writings are replete with Indian scriptures and classics. He opined that 'there will never be a free and enlightened state until the state comes to recognise that individual had a higher and independent power, from which all its own power and authority derived and treats him accordingly.'<sup>22</sup>

Like Thoreau, Gandhi opined in the same tone, 'If the individual ceases to exist, what is left of society? Individual freedom alone can make a man voluntarily surrender himself completely to the service of society. No society can possibly be built on a denial of individual freedom. His revolutionary essay on 'Civil Disobedience' greatly supported the cause of Negroes who were struggling hard to break the age-old shackles of slavery. He stated, All men recognise the right of revolution, that is, the right to refuse allegiance to and to resist the government, when its tyranny or its inefficiency are great and unendurable.

Greatly impressed by Thoreau's essay which Gandhi Happened to read in the middle of 1907, he reproduced its attracts in the subsequent issues of *Indian Opinion*. Thoreau not only provided intellectual sustenance to Gandhi's Gandhiji's ringing call to Indians to boycott law courts, schools and offices was patterned on Thoreau's procedure.<sup>23</sup>

Besiders, Gandhi was influenced by the non-violent action of a few Englishmen like Wat Tyler, John Hampden and John Bunyan whose self-sacrifice had established political supremacy in some ways. It is quite evident that two of them had refused of pay taxes and Bunyan had refused to obey bishops.<sup>24</sup>

‘Rather than Indian non-violence being entirely natural and inevitable, it is clear that Gandhi deserves considerable credit in getting non-violent action accepted as the technique of struggle in the grand strategy for the liberation movement. It is clear that this acceptance by the Indian National Congress was not a moral or religious act. It was a political act made possible because Gandhi offered a course of action which was non-violent but which above all was seen to be practical and effective.’<sup>25</sup>

Thus the above-mentioned facts establish the theory that the non-violent action as a broad technique did not originate with Gandhi and that he neither introduced it into South Africa nor India. ‘Instead, he sought deliberately to learn from known examples of its use elsewhere to assist the struggles of the Indians, and developed a conceptual understanding to the broad non-violent technique and its methods.’<sup>26</sup> But there is no denying the fact that Gandhi made the most significant contribution to the development of the nonviolent technique.

‘Gandhi’s creativity became manifest first of all in his designs for political action. He set up these actions almost like a scientific experiment in which he could control all the variables leaving both his followers and their adversaries only a limited choice of moves which would have to be made in a predictable sequence, the whole process being open to scrutiny for both sides at every stage of the experiment. Instead of letting things happen it was he who designed the happening. This was a new style of politics....Patient daily work for the political organization of the minority, the recruitment and training of members, the raising of funds, the editing of papers, the stream of correspondence—these were the elements of Gandhi’s success which were often overlooked by those who saw in him only the great agitator. He had to build his own voluntary institutions in order to be able to challenge the institutions of the state which were monopolized by others, his creativity was apparent

in his devotion to organizational details just as much as in his more spectacular political actions.<sup>27</sup>

The *satyagraha* method advocated by Gandhi for his movements were unique in their character. These were demonstrations and procession, observance of National Days and Weeks, distribution of party pamphlets amongst the masses, observance of *hartals* and strikes in a nonviolent way, no tax campaign, boycott of schools, colleges, courts and councils, picketing, courting of imprisonment without physical resistance, resignation from government service, fasting, constructive programme, and, last but not the least, non-possession.

The whole movement was pivoted on non-violence. Non-violence would not allow the enemy to use to the full the brute force at his disposal. It was not that every Congressman accepted non-violence as a creed like Gandhi. There were very few indeed who were prepared to subscribe the dictum that *swaraj* would be unacceptable if it came through violence. 'We did not become saints, all of us, but those who had the rare good fortune of feeling the Mahatma's touch were different men ever after. His alchemy turned brass into gold. This happened to individuals all through Gandhiji's life.'<sup>28</sup>

Obviously, Gandhi conceived the method of *satyagraha* as an attitude of human mind and a way of life in order to seek correction of wrongs and conversion of wrong-doers. In the course of his nonviolent struggles in South-Africa and India, he put into application a number of methods for seeking correction of wrongs and conversion of wrongs-doers. Undoubtedly, he was instrumental in rejecting Machiavelli's well known dictum 'the end justifies the means. Instead he was of the firm opinion that it is the means which justify the end. A Confirmed believer in the concept of unity of the ends and means, he stated in unequivocal terms that fair means alone can produce fair results and means which are questionable are unable to achieve worthy ends. For instance, it is not possible to commit theft in a non-violent way.'<sup>29</sup>

With Gandhi, the cult of non-violence was not a celestial concept but it was a mundane concept. This is reason that he happened to choose a mundane symbol—*charkha*, used by common Indian. By doing so he had the firm belief that the

*charkha* would contribute towards the economic and moral regeneration of India. His deep-rooted faith in the economic efficacy of the *charkha* made him to state that, 'every revolution of wheel spins peace, goodwill and love...its voluntary revival with all its implications must mean India's freedom.'<sup>30</sup>

The difficulty in regard to the concept of *ahinsa* is that it appears too all-embracing and too demanding in its reference to thought, word and deed for it to be meaningfully employed. Further the creed of *ahinsa* requires so exacting a discipline that it might seem safer to avoid the term altogether in politics than to encourage people to set themselves so high a standard that they are unable to take difficult decision involving a choice of relative evils. The same objection could be raised, but even more strongly in regard to *satyagraha*. Only a very few people seen of taking upon themselves considerable suffering in support of a worthy cause without becoming embittered in the process. The doctrine of *satyagraha* demands such a high standard of compliance with the laws of the community—compliance out of the highest motives, without a trace of fear or self-interest—that very few people would really qualify for its exercise.<sup>31</sup>

The non-violent struggle launched by Gandhi was considered by some to be a doctrine of negation or a cry of despair. Some interpreted it as the pathetic expression of national frustration. Others, however thought it as a temporary expedient which might meet a natural sudden end. But this kind of criticism never dampened Gandhi's faith as it was an article of faith with him—his *Kalpodruma*—his Jam-i-Jam—Universal Provider.

'Non-Cooperation was neither abnegation, nor frustration. It was the unwillingness to submit to evils that must be resisted; it was the rejection of iniquities which are essentially immoral, it was the repudiation of all kinds of unfairness and wrongdoing which kill the soul of a people; it was the disapprobation of all those agencies and institutions which serve to perpetuate national slavery and degradation; it was the denial of the right of an alien power to rule over other peoples; it was the refusal to endure a state of affairs which is the negation of truth and righteousness. And, therefore, non-cooperation was a moral protest against the authority of those who selfishly and wrongly

seek to create or continue conditions under which a nation cannot rise to its full stature.

The message of Non-Cooperation Movement spread like wild fire, ushering in new dreams and remarkable transformation. The sacrifices made by people were immense and thousands of *satyagrahis* went to jail. Hundred of thousands of them took the vow of penury and suffered untold sufferance unprecedented in the annals of India. They faced hunger and destitution with smile on their faces and did not flinch from their task assigned to them. Gandhi was quite aware of passivity and submission which were the common traits inherent in Indian society. And he had the feeling that these traits and not the British, were the main enemy blocking the way to our independence. He wrote in 1920, 'Non-violence does not mean meek submission to the will of the evil-doer, but it means the pitting of one's whole soul against the will of the tyrant. .. And so I am not pleading for India to practise non-violence being because she is weak. I want her to practise non-violence being conscious of her strength and power'<sup>32</sup> He made it quite clear about the objective of the Non-Cooperation Movement. According to him, '....the primary motive of non-cooperation is self-purification by withdrawing cooperation from unrighteous and unrepentant Government. The secondary object is to rid ourselves of the feeling of helplessness by being independent of all-Government control or supervision, i.e. to govern ourselves in all possible affairs; and in fulfilling both the objects to refrain from doing or promoting injury, or any violence, to individual or property.'<sup>33</sup>

Gandhi always maintained that his participation in politics was to attain certain specified ends and he did not operate for the sake of political power itself. And he did not even hesitate to withdraw the movements, when he found that the ends he professed and preached were in any sense jeopardized. However, even those who were never true Gandhians in any sense felt the pull of his personality and were embarrassed by outright oppositely and were embarrassed by outright opposition to him.<sup>34</sup>

Gandhi was of the opinion that an individual could remain non-violent in his behaviour, but it was difficult for the masses to do so. An ardent advocate of basic nonviolent social change,

he was fully conscious of the old social order which according to him was inadequate and replete with dangerous trends which retarded the development of human personality. And for this, he suggested improvement of individuals in their own lives and ways of living; a constructive programme in order to begin building a new social order and the practice of various forms of non-violent action. By doing so he had in mind India's needs in various spheres.

In Gandhi's conception, the cult of non-violence was indeed no cover for any kind of cowardice; rather it was the weapon of the strong, 'a supreme virtue of the brave'. He wrote, Cowardice is wholly inconsistent with non-violence. Translation from swordsmanship to non-violence is possible, and at times even an easy stage. Non-violence, therefore, presupposes ability to strike. It is a conscious deliberate restraint put upon one's desire for vengeance.... Non-resistance is restraint voluntarily undertaken for the good of society.

The prominent aspects of the constructive programme which Gandhi sponsored and operated at various levels, included communal unity, removal of untouchability, prohibition, promotion of *khadi*, development of village industries, improvement of sanitation in the villages, promotion of the idea of basic education, progress of adult education, welfare of women, education in health and hygiene, development of national language, economic equality, welfare of peasantry, establishment of more labour unions, help to hill tribes, care for lepers and beggars and suggestions for improving the lot of students.

Undoubtedly, Gandhi gave a remarkable twist to the political fabric of nationalism. Earlier, as it is evident, the emotional and moral ingredients were provided by the extremist leadership which held sway over the Indian National Congress. The course of the national movement in the first and a half decade of the twentieth century, till Gandhi emerged on the scene, was marked by the ideological conflict between liberalism and extremism and experimentation in the new techniques of passive resistance in contrast to the established method of petitions and prayers.

Whereas, Gandhi apprised the masses of their abysmal poverty due of the gigantic under-employed and unemployed



man-power of India, he also made them realize the fact that British know our helplessness. .. To get *swaraj*, then, is to get rid of our helplessness. He was quite sure in his mind that even 'God cannot grant *swaraj*; we must earn it ourselves. He however, placed a pre-condition before the masses of India who must first alter their whole way of life, their values and above all, their thinking if they wished to achieve this kind of miracle. Indeed, it appeared on the face of it a too optimistic and ambitious a scheme to overthrow a well-knit and well-established Empire within the frame work of a non-violent political programme lasting for one year only. The desired goal, for the time being, remained unfulfilled though undoubtedly the movement had greatly awakened the masses of India to the hitherto unknown realities about the *Raj*.

Later on, when Gandhi found out that his definition of *swaraj* was not fully appreciated by his colleagues and followers, he wirelessly let the matter rest till the representatives of people could formulate its exact definition with a unanimous consensus.

Gandhi wished to inject the sense of social work only in those workers who were prepared to devote their full-time for it. He converted half-day politicians into full-time politicians and saw to it that they were imbued with interest, energy, initiative and determination for work. The result was that the leadership during the movement shifted to those who had these qualities. This also led to the emergence of a new class of leaders in the rural areas.

Thus in the history of Indian nationalism, the Non-Cooperation Movement holds a prestigious place as Gandhi's charismatic leadership. It is considered as his shrewd and tactical contribution so far as the national struggle is concerned. It was indeed a tactic and political device which gave strength and confidence to a common worker functioning under the banner of the Indian National Congress and enabled them to escape from the impasse they had reached in 1920, when both the politics of terrorism and the position had proved unproductive.

It remained for Gandhi to make the most significant political experiments at that time in the use of non-cooperation, disobedience and defiance to control rulers, alter policies and undermine political systems. With Gandhi's experiments with

the technique, its character was broadened and refinements made. Conscious efforts were made in developing the strategy and tactics. The number of specific forms or methods of action was enlarged. He linked it with a programme of social change, and the building of new institutions.... A link was forged between means of mass struggle and a moral preference for non-violent means, although for participants this preference was not necessarily absolutist in character.<sup>35</sup>

It is indeed pertinent to notice that Gandhi's role in politics was rather peculiar. He was not a political theoretician or analyst. But, in many ways, he was an innovator in politics and was well-conversant with the political realities of his period. He had a remarkable capacity to sense the feelings and capacities of ordinary people of India, whom he met and conversed with them at close quarters. He even did not fail to understand numerous problems facing the peasantry. With such an understanding of the divers problems, he thought, the non-violent action in politics would be quite viable, convenient and feasible.

Gandhi expressed his ideal in his most significant assertion: I cannot and will not hate Englishmen, nor will I bear their yoke. His Non-Cooperation did not imply opposition to western civilization or culture, because it was western. In fact, it symbolized the fight against an alien culture and civilization. His demand for national education did not actually mean a total rejection of foreign education, but it meant the promotion of national culture as the first and foremost step for national regeneration. Besides, if British law-courts, councils and other government institutions were to be boycotted, the object was moral purification and not an exhibition of hatred, ill-will or spite.

It was quite glaring from his long career that his thinking was consistently developing. He was an experimenter in the development of 'war without violence'. He showed a sense of humility while assessing himself. I claim to be no more than an average man with less than average ability.<sup>36</sup> This may be true of his earlier career, when he paid a visit to South Africa after achieving no success as a lawyer in India. In 1921, he confessed, 'My Mahatmaship is worthless.'<sup>37</sup>

For all his doings in various spheres, it is often found somewhat difficult to place Gandhi and Gandhian ideology

within the traditional schools of political thought. Often he is labelled as a conservative, a philosophical anarchist, a socialist, a pro-capitalist and a primitive Communist. Undoubtedly, his mode of thought had all these traits and it may be somewhat difficult to prove that he had any kind of linkage with these schools. He always showed much concern for the means to be adopted to achieve his political and social goal which could ameliorate the condition of the masses of India.

Undoubtedly, Mahatma Gandhi was a national leader of transparent sincerity, moral courage and spiritual intensity. He was the only full-time national leader and perhaps the only man of action on the Indian political scene. Indeed no other Indian leader of the time, except C.R. Das, the next renowned leader after the demise of Bal Gangadhar Tilak, could either challenge the national leadership of Gandhi in the opening years of the twenties. He had thoroughly captivated the India masses whose leadership he had gained by virtue of his charisma. The source of this power and popularity was due to numerous reasons which had deep linkage with this political doings. Besides he had strengthened his identity with his well-known national slogans like *Allah Ho Akbar* (God alone is great); *Bande Matarm* (Hail Motherland); *Bharat Mata Ki Jai* (Victory to the Motherland) and *Hindu-Mussalman Ki Jai*.

For the British *Raj* Gandhi was an enigmatic personality who created serious political and administrative problems which indeed had nightmarish effect on the minds of the Viceroy in India and the officials of the home government. The tactician in him had greatly puzzled the governmental machinery at all levels. He revived the formidable device of *hartal*, sought Hindu-Muslim unity; launched the Caliphate agitation and ensured its linkage with the *swaraj* movement and produced an emotional fervent in which millions of people were prepared to lay down their everything at his behest. The programme of picketing shops and commercial establishments dealing in foreign cloth was considered to be akin to violent action by many, but to Gandhi it was simply a methodology of non-violence, based on gentle persuasion and not on coercion of any kind. Time and again he emphasised his point by stating that picketing was always to be unaggressive and should have no involvements like hostile demonstration, obstruction and intimidation. Broadly, it should be perfectly peaceful and educative.

It is obvious that the first Non-cooperation Movement was the first unarmed revolt in the history of India. But it failed to achieve its three major objectives for which it was commenced. Neither could the *swaraj* be achieved nor the Turkish Caliphate was rehabilitated. The rectification of the Punjab wrongs could also not be achieved: The movement was, however well-sustained for about two years, till March, when it was withdrawn on account of a violent action by the Congress volunteers. On the whole, the discipline, devotion, self-sacrifice and enthusiasm were glaring phenomena which were pitted against the *Raj* which was well-equipped with a powerful bureaucracy, defence personnel, army and, 1st but not the least, a strong backing from the Home government. It was thus a fight, as Gandhi put it, between the 'soul force' and the 'material force' and the latter had edge over the former on account of numerous reasons while proving a helping factor for the *Raj*. Never before in the history of India, since its connection with Britain, had popular indignation and popular enthusiasm been greater. Never before during this long period had the country secured the 'loving and ungrudging' services of so many of her sons.

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## CHAPTER : 5

# British Policy

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### MONTAGU ON POLITICAL SITUATION<sup>1</sup>

Montagu expressed much concern on the political situation in India: 'The news from India seems very gloomy and I sympathise with you dearly. Indeed it is a matter both for you and me to regret that not only has non-cooperation succeeded more than I thought possible, but that our political opponents rule their hands with joy at this new difficulty that besets us.

'..... A great interest is going to be, and has already begun to be, taken in the movement over here. We shall, of course, be attacked for not interfering with Gandhi...If we do all we can to encourage the moderates and put fresh life into them, we are likely to strengthen them to attract the weavers in the extremist camp.... Non-cooperation is an omnibus vote of censure on the Government carried to the length of direct action. The Government must of course see that direct action of this kind does not interfere with its primary duties.

By October 1920, Montagu felt much worried over the Indian situation, 'I am getting more than a little worried about the length to which the activities of Gandhi and his colleagues may go... I ought to point out that reports of this kind are likely to have exciting effects upon a harassed Secretary of State, but also on the British public to whom he has to answer.

Montagu gave an assessment of the Indian situation on 16 February 1921: 'The situation in India puzzles me.... The situation is very serious. Gandhi is worshipped. His influence cannot be overestimated.... Nobody in India, European or India, thinks it could be wise to touch Gandhi.... Meanwhile non-cooperation appears to be getting more dangerous.... I never thought that it would die of inanition.

Gandhi indeed was well aware of the temper and thinking of the mind of the British—both the Home Government and its

representatives in Delhi. He was fully convinced that they would never yield except under sufficient pressure through a prolonged, consistent and well-organized political action. Picketing was thus one of the well-chosen device to be carried on by men and women volunteers at various levels.

## **FISCHER ON BOYCOTT OF COUNCILS<sup>2</sup>**

Fischer in the House of Commons on 27 October 1920 about the boycott of councils. 'It is impossible to estimate the result of the boycott of councils with exactness, but so far this has been the most successful feature of the programme of non-cooperation.

'In Madras resignations of honorary officers and council candidates continue, but there has been no resent renunciation of titles. In Bombay, report is made of intimidation to secure resignations of titles. Many seats are uncontested owing to withdrawal of Congress candidates, and for the two seats in the Indian Legislative Assembly for the Bombay general electorals there were only two nominations; but all Indian constituencies have nominated candidates, though in many there was a doubt up to the last moment...In the United Provinces there are signs of election rivalry in many districts. In the Punjab, reluctance to make personal sacrifices is limiting the effect of non-cooperation. In Assam, there is no lack of candidates for councils; in only one constituency has there been nomination. In the Central Provinces, a committee has recently been appointed to secure the boycott of councils and there have been two resignations of titles of three of honorary magistrates.

## **VICEROY'S VIEWS ON NON-COOPERATION MOVEMENT<sup>3</sup>**

The Viceroy opined in his telegraphic communication to the Secretary of State on 23 January 1921, 'The lull in non-cooperation movement has disappeared—agitation is being carried on vigorously in Patan, Tirhus and Bhagalpur. Local arbitration courts and Seva Samitis are being established National schools are being set up ..

On 8 February 1921, the viceroy wrote to the Secretary of State about the educational institutions in Central India. Active agitation in support of non-cooperation is gaining strength and is principally directed to boycott of colleges and schools to which action of Calcutta students gave further strength. The movement is spreading in Nagpur and Berar Divisions and at Jubbulpur, and a disquieting feature is the attempt of undermine teachers. National Schools are being established in several places and in Nagpur the number of students in National Schools is stated to have risen to 450.

Regarding the political condition in the Punjab, the Viceroy stated in February 1921, 'Non-Cooperation *Panchayats* are set up in different villages with the object of boycotting executive authority. Students and hired preachers have been sent out from Lahore to further non-cooperation movement.

The Viceroy opined in the last week of February 1921. The non-cooperation agitation shows no signs of abatement. Poison is spreading to large villages... There have been some cases of the difficulty to Government servants obtaining supplies on tour and social boycott continues to be practised.

The Viceroy informed the Secretary of State on 23 January 1921, The abandonment by C.R. Das of his practice as a lawyer has given an impetus to the non-cooperation movement and other lawyers are likely to follow his example. Strike in colleges has been reported by Education Department separately. Expectation of visit from Gandhi has also quickened strike.

## VICEROY ON KHILAFAT<sup>4</sup>

His Excellency the Viceroy has made two important declarations, one on the Khilafat and the other on non-cooperation and the policy of the Government arising from it. On the Khilafat his Excellency has given an exact indication of the Government mentality. He thinks that he has discharged his responsibility fully towards the Muslims of India by pressing their claim. Whereas, the Indian contention is that, on a matter so vital to the Muslims, he should have resigned when he found that the Imperial Government had disallowed the Indian claim. Nobody accepts the plea of Britain's helplessness at the



Counciltable of the League Nations. The public may also recall the fact that, when the terms of the Treaty of Sevres were published, the Viceroy entered upon an elaborate defence of the part played by the Premier. How comes it, then, that he finds himself again pleading the Muslim cause! Would he have done so if there had been no non-cooperation? And what has he to say even now? If the claim is disallowed and non-cooperation is still pursued, he assumes that anarchy will be the result. Therefore, the Government, he threatens, will step in to restore order. We know what "restoring" order means. His Excellency forgets that, if there is anarchy in India, it would be due to the criminal breach of their duty both by the Imperial and the Indian Government towards the three hundred millions of the people of India.

A Viceroy may be satisfied with merely pleading the case of India. Can India be satisfied? Can a man who is dying of hunger be satisfied with mere sympathy, especially when he knows that the sympathizer can give more than mere sympathy? When the Indian Government pleads the duty of subordination to an immoral superior power, it must share the adverse judgement that may be pronounced against the latter. No duty devolves upon any servant of submitting to orders in breach of trust or honour. The Treaty of Sevres is a breach of solemn pledges and the ordinary canons of honour. One who sincerely sympathizes with a starving man is presumed to share such suffering, and is not expected to shoot him when the latter shows symptoms of becoming and through the pangs of hunger. The responsibility for anarchy, if it does overtake India, will therefore rest with the Indian Government and with those who support it in spite of its wrongs, not upon those who refuse to perform its wrongs, not upon those who refuse to perform the impossible task of making people forget vital wrongs and try to direct their anger in a proper channel.

His Excellency wonders at the description of the Government as Satanic. He is wrong in adopting the description for himself. For nobody has accused individual of being Satanic. His Excellency's adroitly taking in that category his Indian

colleagues is no artless to deceive anyone. But the system that the Viceroy and his colleagues, whether Indian or English, administer, possess all the attributes of Satan—deceitfulness, hypocrisy, unscrupulousness, and unmitigated tyranny on occasion and its justification tempered by half-hearted confessions. His Excellency may rest assured that there is no partiality in non-cooperation. There is always a place of honour for an Englishman in the ranks of non-cooperationists. And no Indian cooperator will be spared the criticism that may be deserved by him for his complicity in the crimes of an evil Government.

His Excellency is on safest ground when he enunciates the doctrine of meeting non-cooperation by propaganda—by the counter-propaganda of cooperation. He is entitled to take all the comfort he can from the fact that both the titleholders and the students have made a poor response in point of numbers and that sufficient Indians have been found to act as members of the reformed legislatures. Non-cooperationists, whilst admitting that the numerical response might have been greater, manage, however, to take pleasure in the titles and the schools and the law courts having fallen into disrepute. These institutions no longer remain the objects of idolatry that they once were. Non-cooperationists are satisfied that practising lawyers and title holders can no longer be popular leaders. They know that even those who have not given up titles, practice or schools, are at heart non-cooperators and confess their weakness.

His Excellency has been misled by his advisers in believing that non-cooperationists have only now turned their attention to the masses. Indeed, they are our sheet-anchor. But we are not going to tamper with them. We shall continue patiently to educate them politically till they are ready for safe action. There need be no mistake about our goal. As soon as we feel reasonably confident of non-violence continuing among them in spite of provoking executions, we shall certainly call upon the sannyasi to lay down his arms and the peasantry to suspend payment of taxes. We are hoping that time may never have to be reached. We shall leave no stone unturned to avoid such a

serious step. But we will not flinch when the moment has come and the need has arisen.

## DISCUSSION IN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY<sup>5</sup>

In the Legislative Assembly Muhammad Yamin Khan moved the following resolution: "This Assembly recommends to the Governor-General-in-Council to appoint a Commission consisting of three elected members of the Assembly, two elected members of the Council of State and two officials to thoroughly investigate the real or supposed grievances of the people leading to non-cooperation and to make recommendations.

The resolution was supported by Zahir-ud-Din Ahmed, Mahmood S. Charminad Sahib Bahadur, Pandit Radha Krishan Das, & S.C. Shahani and opposed by Chaudhari Shahab-ud-Din, J.P. Cotellingam, Amjad Ali, Tej Bahadur Sapru, Mansetjee Jeeja and William Vincent who argued as follows.

Muhammad Yamin Khan stated: 'At present there is great tension between the Government and the people and no Government has ever been successful, and history bears ample testimony to this fact, to carry on its administration properly and peacefully until it has acted in conformity with the wishes of the people.... If this state of affairs continues, the existing tension will go on increasing every day which, taking a deep root in the minds of the masses, might one day lead to anarchy... If the Government of India are really anxious that they should administer peacefully and carry on their work smoothly and in close cooperation with the people, then it is best to try and remove all kinds of misunderstanding and to impress on the minds of the people that, whatever they could do they have done and to convince them that nothing further lies in their power. He quoted an Indian proverb in Persian:

*Al Solim ab-e-ze sar chashme ba band*

*Kah choo pur shud natwan bastan jee.*

It means that when a spring bubbles up it should be stopped at the time, for when it begins to flow into a river, it will be impossible to stop it. This non-cooperation is only in its infancy now, and the remedy must come at once. But if the remedy is not applied and if it grows up, if the spring becomes

a river, then there will be nothing to strip it—unless by bloodshed, will be most unfortunate. I think, Sir, that with this object we must act at once.'

Zahir-ud-Din Ahmed remarked, 'The best course would be for the Government to accept a commission in order to ascertain the views of Mussalmans in time. If you do not satisfy the Mussalmans now, you will not be able to satisfy them afterwards, just as what would have satisfied Irishmen some years ago is not satisfying them now. There is a Persian verse which runs:

*Agar bini a nabini chah Ast*

*Agar khomesh bini gunah Ast.*

'Which, when translated means that when you see a blind man approaching a well, if you remain silent you commit a sin. Now that is the position. I speak out because by remaining silent I should be doing an injury and not a service to Government.

Shivnandan Prasad Singh stated, I must, however, give credit to Mr. Gandhi, for whom I have personally great respect, for having declared that non-cooperation should be of a non-violent type. But cases are not wanting, Sir, to show that his followers have been found to transgress the commandments of their Guru'.

Similarly Amjad Ali opined, 'No amount of legislation, I care say, can put down the discontent or pacify the people of this country better than the policy which is at present adopted by the Government, namely, a policy of love and affection, and not a policy of terrorism. If the policy of terrorism is adopted again and the country is again driven, to unrest and crime, there will be no rest till Doomsday. I assure the House on that point. If the Government adopts a policy of love and sympathy, as it is doing nowadays, then this unrest, this non-cooperation, will die out gradually, it is dying out from today This non-cooperation movement consists only in this, namely, that some students who have no love for their studies are boycotting educational institutions, excited by persons at their back who are interested in the students boycotting the educational institutions. If the students say to them 'We have boycotted the schools, but you are going on with your profession, the reply is

'We cannot, but you go on'. I say Sir, that this non-cooperation movement is going to sink' it is going to die, and it will die as it is bound to die.

Chaudhuri Shahab-ud-Din stated, Sir, there cannot be two opinions that there is unrest and dissatisfaction in the country. The position is indeed very serious, and the Government has to face it. As regards the causes of unrest and dissatisfaction, I think, as the Honourable Home Member has said, they are there. No Commission is needed to go into the question of causes. They are already ascertained and definitely known. As regards the remedies, the question of Khilafat is now before the Allies who are considering it; We must wait and see. As regards the question of Swaraj, it is a big one and I do not think Government is prepared to give it at once. Of course, if the Government is prepared to give *Swaraj* to the country, the whole thing ends. As regards the Punjab question, I am unable to agree with the Honourable the Home Member that it is a closed chapter. I must, with the deference to him, as well as to those who consider that this question is closed and ended, say, 'No', so long as martial law prisoners are in jail, Punjab, the dishonoured, insulted, disgraced, humiliated and injured Punjab can never feel satisfied. That is the grievance which I want to put both from the legal side, and from the side of clemency before this House, if I ever get an opportunity. Unless Punjab grievances are redressed, the feelings of the Punjab will never subside. As regards the other questions, of course, Khilafat is already under consideration and Swaraj is a big problem. Therefore, it is impracticable to appoint a Commission which will go from village to village. It may take 20 years to ascertain the causes; and by the time it is able to submit its report to this House, I have no doubt, numerous more causes will have cropped up. For these reasons, Sir, I oppose this Resolution.

Tej Bahadur Sapru who opposed the resolution opined, 'I also venture to think that this Commission which you may solemnly and seriously appoint today will be repudiated tomorrow by those very people. Therefore, why invite a deliberate indignity upon this House? Is it consistent with the self-respect of this House to appoint a Commission when you know for certain that tomorrow you will be told that this House has no authority to represent this sentiment of the country

and that those men who have been appointed are not the men who represent the feelings of the non-cooperation party.... Therefore, what is the good of appointing a roving Commission the object of which is to enquire into the causes of unrest which may be political, economic, social or any other. It is only on these grounds that I will ask the House to reject this Resolution.

William Vincent replied, 'We have done everything possible to ensure that the Muhammedan feeling should be adequately represented. I have placed all the facts quite recently before the Council of State and they have been fully published, and I don't want to detain the Assembly by a repetition of those statements.

The motion was however negatived.

## **GANDHI'S INTERVIEW WITH READING<sup>6</sup>**

About his interview with Gandhi, Lord Reading informed the Secretary of State thus:

'There is nothing striking about his appearance. He came to visit me in a white dhoti and cap, woven on a spinning wheel, with bare feet and legs, and my first impression on seeing him ushered into my room was that there was nothing to arrest attention in his appearance and that I should have passed him by in the street without a second look at him. When he talks the impression is different. He is direct and expresses himself well in excellent English with a fine appreciation of the words he uses. There is no hesitation about him and there is a ring of sincerity in all that he utters, save when discussing some political questions.

'His religious views are, I believe, genuinely held and he is convinced to a point almost bordering on fanaticism that non-violence and love will give India its independence and enable it to withstand the British Government. His religious and moral views are admirable and indeed are on a remarkably high altitude, but I must confess that I find it difficult to understand his practice of them in politics. To put it quite briefly, he is like the rest of us; when engaged in a political movement he wishes to gather all under his umbrella and to reform them and bring them to his views. He has consequently

to accept many with whom he is not in accord, and has to do his best to keep the combination together. This is particularly true of the Hindu-Moslem combination which I think rests upon insecure foundation....

'In the course of six interviews—the first of four hours and a half, the second of three hours, the third of an hour and a half, the fourth of an hour and a half, the fifth of an hour and a half and the sixth of three-quarters of an hour, I have had many opportunities of judging him. A critical point came towards the end of the second interview, when I, for the first time, adopted a firm and rather severe attitude. He seemed surprised and I think his attitude changed from that moment.

'Our conversations were of the frankest; he was supremely controus with manner of distinction. A slight incident at our first interview reveals a pleasant oriental courtesy. I wanted tea and I pressed him to have some. He would take nothing. He then asked for hot water, which was immediately brought whilst I waited for tea I was concerned lest his hot water should get cold, and when my tea was brought he said he was letting his hot water cold. He replied: 'I could not think of tasting it until you had your tea.

'He held in every way to his word on the various discussions we had. He explained in public that he had applied interviews and gave quite an accurate account of the events leading to his letter to my Private Secretary. Altogether you will judge that I liked him and that I believe there are possibilities in the future. Upon leaving he seemed quite affected and earnestly assured me, he would come, whenever I wanted him.

'Discussion then led to the meaning attributed to Swaraj and frankly I am as much at a loss now to explain it as when he came into the room, although I have tried hard to get a definite meaning from him. All I could gather was that when the Indians had regained their self-respect and had pursued a policy of non-cooperation with the Government and had refrained from violence, they would have gained *Swaraj*. I asked the question point blank: "what is it in the actions of the Government that makes you pursue the policy of non-cooperation with the Government?"

'The answer, repeated more than once during our interviews, was that he was filled with distrust of the Government and that all their actions, even though apparently good, made him suspect their motives. I pressed him to be more precise, and eventually he stated that he had sometime ago arrived at the conclusion that every action of the Government by the appeared good, and indeed was good, was actuated by the sinister motive of trying to fasten British dominion on India. This was his arguments about the new reformed councils, and in my judgement is the root cause of his present attitude to the Government.

## **NEHRU'S CONCERN AT GOVERNMENT'S REPRESSION<sup>7</sup>**

The following note was prepared by Jawaharlal Nehru for Gandhi sometime in June 1921 and published in *The Independent*, on 24 August 1921. 'A very determined and persistent effort has been made by Government to kill this movement (it was in relation with the Kisan movement, the trial and conviction of young workers, the use of Security Sections and Section 144). There was no disturbance of any kind and Government was emboldened to take concerted action to crush the Kisans, columns of cavalry. Artillery and infantry were marched through the principal districts and people were forced to supply *rasad*, etc. to the troops. In one place school boys were made to salute the European troops.

'In accordance with Seditious Meetings Act public meetings were banned and any person taking part or organising such meetings was liable to be arrested without warrant. It had been in worse in Faizabad, Partapgarh, Sultanpur and Rai Bareli. Before this Act was applied, all meetings were prohibited under Section 144 in some of these districts. This order was obeyed and no meeting were held. In spite of this the Seditious Meetings Act was enforced. Our workers are harassed in a variety of ways. A host of C.I.D. Men and uniformed policemen follow them and precede them. Villagers are threatened lest they join the Congress to help us in any other way. They have been told early that to use a *charkha* is against the law, to



shout Mahatma Gandhi Ki Jai' is a heinous offence, to sign the Congress form an illegal, etc. Men who have signed are threatened with legal proceedings and bribes are extorted to hush matters up, Section 144 has also been used to proclaim whole districts and prohibit meetings.

'Many gun licences have been confiscated. Government servants have been threatened with dismissal because their relatives were non-cooperators. Orders have been issued prohibiting the use of the Gandhi Cap. Notices have been issued threatening those who collect and those who pay subscriptions to the Swaraj Fund. Congress and Kisan Sabha offices have been raided by the police.

### **ACTION BY LOCAL GOVERNMENT<sup>8</sup>**

The secretary, U.P. Provincial Congress Committee reported on 20 January 1922 'the local Government by its notification No. 2931-32 dated the 22nd November 1921, declared the Congress Volunteer Corps as unlawful assembly and ordered their disbandment at once. Simultaneously, the district authorities in almost all the districts issued an order prohibiting the holding of meetings, hartal, boycott, picketing and civil disobedience .. On the average, I find that each district has enrolled about 2000 volunteers at the lowest. The total strength of volunteers as it stands in this province at present is about 80,000. A few ladies have also enrolled themselves as volunteers .. In some places volunteers were assaulted and beaten with lathis, batons, butt-ends and rifles.. Congress offices were sacrificed and volunteer registers and pledge forms were removed by the police.... The securities of 'The Independent' and Swaraj have been forfeited and they were compelled to cease publication.

### **JINNAH'S INTERVIEW WITH READING<sup>9</sup>**

Delhi, November 2, 1921, 'Jinnah came to me yesterday and had long interview. I found him distinctly, able rather extremist, not a non-separationist, but somewhere between moderate and extremist. I think he stands politically where Malaviya does, i.e. he holds strong views about acceleration of

Swaraj, redress of Punjab wrongs, in favour of Khilafat agitation, but has not joined Gandhi, whose policy he regards as destructive and not constructive... Punjab grievances were capable, he thought, of settlement on basis of expressions of regret, and perhaps more emphasized statement that humiliation orders must be made impossible for future, and that some officers inculcated should be dismissed. On Swaraj he realized the difficulty to agree upon some formula...

'I definitely disline of commit myself in any shape or form, save in expression of sympathy with Moslem Indian opinion which I have already publicly made. On Punjab grievances I reiterated the various steps we had taken. And added that I could not countenance even discussion of dismissal of subordinate officers who had merely obeyed superior orders.. I pointed out the injury that would be done to India and to the obtaining of Swaraj if any insult or affront was offered to the Prince of Wales.... He agreed, but thought that it was very difficult for the general public to take this view ....I was impressed by his evident desire to see the present moment for settlement, which is on the eve of the all-India Congress Committee meeting on the 4th.

'He left me on the understanding that if better conditions prevail with regard to Greece and Turkey, and I find that I can give greater hope, I should let him know and he would come again at any minute I called him. I called him. I am left under the impression that there is a real desire to arrive at a settlement, particularly as he told me he had seen both Gandhi and Malaviya before he left (Bombay) for Delhi. I have no solid ground for this impression, and; therefore, give it with caution. I was not particularly desirous of encouraging him in his role of broker, as he termed it, for I see little if any prospect of agreement between Gandhi and myself. Moreover, anxious as I am to banish illegal and substitute constitutional agitation, I am not at present prepared to make substantial sacrifices to arrive at it.

'Jinnah's personality, as distinguished from intellect, did not favourably impress me... He has acute sensibility and subtlety of mind, and yet I think he lacks perception of impression he is creating. I prefer Malaviya.'

## **DISCUSSION ON POLICY OF REPRESSION<sup>10</sup>**

In the Legislative Assembly Munshi Iswar Saran moved the following resolution on the policy of repression on which arguments were given by numerous members. 'This Assembly recommends to the Governor-General-in-Council the immediate abandonment of the policy of repression inaugurated in the country. The member stated, ....the situation is grave in all conscience... Let us view things in their true perspective. One finds that one Provincial Government after another resorted to Criminal Law Amendment Act, the Seditious Meetings Act, the Defence of India Act and the Press Act. Sir I have seen it stated by very responsible people that this is not a policy of repression. I shall beg the House to consider this question with me for one moment, without considering for the time being whether it is justifiable or not, but simply to confine their attention to the issue whether or not it is a policy of repression. For my purpose, it is enough to say that Government itself has called some of these measures repressive.

'Speaking of my own province, I say that men whose political opinions you might find fault with, but whose character and attainments you dare not question, have been sent to jail because they have signed the pledge of these volunteer organizations. Take the case of Pandit Motilal Nehru. It is open to anybody in this House to disagree with his politics, but I submit that by virtue of his attainments, his knowledge, and his position, he could have well aspired to occupy any position open to an Indian under the Crown. Take another distinguished man in Benares, Babu Bhagrandas, a scholar, a student, an educationist. He has been sent to jail, and the case is so gross that even Dr. Subrahmania Aiyer from Madras has publicly said in the papers that an appeal should be made to His Excellency the Governor-General to consider the case of Babu Bhagwandas. What more has been done? Indiscriminate arrests, trials in camera, sentences which are out of all proportion to the technical offences which have been committed. You find that boys and men with honourable records have been sentenced to various terms of rigorous imprisonment because they joined these volunteer organizations. This, I submit, is a thing which Government will do well to stop and stop forthwith. What has

been, I ask, the result of this policy which has been inaugurated by Government? The result has been that this policy has been taken by the non-cooperators as a challenge to freedom of speech and to freedom of association. Thousands upon thousands have become volunteers; Hartals which would otherwise not have been so complete have been made absolutely complete by the inauguration of this policy. Jail has lost its terror. Instead of being a place of humiliation, jail has become a place of honour, and to some, it has become a place of pilgrimage. Furthermore, this policy has thrown into the ranks of the non-cooperators, thousands upon thousands of men who before took no interest in politics. Their psychology is easily understandable. You find a man with a clean and decent life, esteemed and respected by his fellowmen, and when you find that man sent to jail for an offence of this nature, general sympathy goes out to him because the feeling, right or wrong, is created that the man is made to suffer for the sake of his country. The result, I say has been the aggravation of the very evil which Government would wish to remove. Look at Lahore, I read in the papers only last night that hundreds of ladies have come out and are going about in the streets as volunteers. But, Sir, as regards the policy, I must urge its abandonment, because its initiation has been bad. I must urge its abandonment, because its application has been worse; I must urge its abandonment, because its administration has been still worse. I must urge its abandonment, because it has alienated public sympathy. I must urge its abandonment, because it has aggravated the very evil that it was intended to remove. I must urge that abandonment of this policy, because I believe that if persisted in, it is bound to lead to disaster.

"The position is this, that the Government is out to fight non-cooperation and these are the weapons which the Government has adopted. Sir, I must frankly confess that I was not under that impression so far, but if that be so, then let me say most clearly that the weapons which Government has chosen are feeble and weak. You cannot crush, you cannot destroy non-cooperation by the Criminal Law Amendment Act, by the Seditious Meetings Act, by the Defence of India Act and by the Press Act. If you wish to embark on a warfare like this, I ask you to choose stronger and more violent weapons, because

these feeble weapons create irritation, they create indignation and resentment; they do not achieve the aim that you have in view.

H.S. Gour supported the resolution and opined, 'Now, Sir, on the 23rd of November 1921, the United Provinces Government issued a notification and commenced arrests of volunteers. On the 5th or I think, on the 6th of December, 4 days before the Prince was due in Lucknow, the Nehru Brothers and Jawaharlal Nehru and 12 or 13 other persons were arrested, and later on 50 or 60 members of the Congress Committee were arrested on the ground that they had enlisted themselves as volunteers. Up to that date, there was no suggestion that the Nehrus or members of the Congress volunteers in the United Provinces had either aided and abetted the commission of acts of violence or had themselves habitually committed such acts. The Honourable the mover of this Resolution has paid a compliment to the doyen of the Allahabad Bar, Pandit Motilal Nehru, in which I Join. I am sure, Sir, that no Member in this House can seriously say that the Nehrus either encouraged or aided persons to commit acts of violence or that they were members of an association which habitually committed such acts.

Remember, Sir, we desire as much as any member of the Government would desire that there should be no disturbance of peace in the country and we are as anxious as any member of the Government would be to stamp out disorder and to arrest the spirit of lawlessness which is abroad in the country, but we are equally jealous of the privileges on this House and we desire and demand that before the Government launches out on this policy of repression, the Members of this House should be previously consulted and their concurrence obtained.

Sir that so far as the Government of India are concerned, they cannot stand acquitted of the charge of having embarked on a policy of general repression which was not justifiable under the circumstances of the case. Let me, Sir, clear the ground by saying that if any member of the association of volunteers or the Congress or the Khilafat was guilty of acts of violence or intimidation or of committing any unlawful acts, He should have been dealt with under the general penal law, but there is no reason why the whole association, the whole movement should be straggled because of the acts of one or two or some or many.

Fortunately, Sir the constructive proposal I have to make is one which does not call for any lengthy explanation. We demand that people who have been arrested in Calcutta, in the United Provinces, Bengal, Patna and elsewhere should be now released and those who have heard the history of the recent repression will have no doubt left in their minds that the contingency against which provision was made is over so far as Bengal, United Provinces, Bihar and Orissa and Burma are concerned, and what reason have the Government now to keep in duress while leaders like C.R. Das, like the Nehrus, like Lala Lajpat Rai and other who I submit, have not been guilty of any substantive crime.

In support of the resolution, T.V. Seshagiri Ayyar argued thus: 'What I ask my friends on the Government benches is this. Do you think every other possible recourse to law had been exhausted when you extended the Criminal Law Amendment Act to the various provinces? I ask you that question, Sir, because it has not been a preventive measure, but a provocative measure. It has not put down crime. On the other hand, it has declared a large number of honest men criminals. Consequently, I ask you whether you had exhausted all the avenues of putting an end to what you call disturbances before you thought of extending the Criminal Law Amendment Act on the various provinces? You, on the Government side, know under what circumstances that Act was passed, and for what purpose it was intended. It was intended to apply to cases where there is rebellion in the country, where the ordinary law in the country is inadequate to deal with the situation, and where it is absolutely necessary to protect lives and property by other means. Is that the position now? Are you prepared to admit that the country is in such a state of rebellion that you are unable to govern it without extending the Criminal Law Amendment Act? I submit, Sir, it would be clear confession of weakness on the part of Government to say so. I do not think that there is a state of things in the country that you can honestly say that but for the extension of the Criminal Law Amendment Act it would be impossible to govern the country. What after all, has been the result of extending the Criminal Law Amendment Act? You are substituting the executive

mandate for the opinion of the judiciary. If you thought that a particular association was unlawful, why did you not go before the constituted authorities and take their opinion?

Sir, if the Government goes on at this rate, they should be under no delusion that they will be able to put down in the long run this movement and to say that the country has been brought to peace. That, I respectfully submit to members on the Government benches, is impossible. You are creating more unrest than there is in the country, and the result of continuing this policy will be that in course of time there will be such sullen discontent and such a grim determination to resist the law that you find it impossible to deal with the situation. You will have to build more jails and you will have to deal with a people who are deeply discontented and who are not all friendly towards you. Under these circumstances, it is the duty of Government to see that this policy is no longer persisted in, and if there is an honest opening for a Conference, it should welcome it and see that the country is no longer subjected to the grave trials which it has been undergoing during the last 5 or 6 weeks. Otherwise, what would be the alternative? The Government will have to give up all their other duties and take to policing us.

Bishambhar Nath, a prominent member from Allahabad and Jansi Division spoke in favour of the resolution. 'A regular crusade against political bodies solemnly pledged to non-violence indiscriminate arrests and convictions of some of the most respectable citizen for offences merely technical, heavy and capricious sentences on youths guilty of no other than juvenile freaks capable of being remedied more affectively by their guardians and teachers rather than by magistrates and jailors or methods which, to say the least, are not likely to foster affection for the Government.

'Nobody holds a brief for those who use violence. Punish them by all means. People who transgress the law of the land Deliberately must be prepared to take the consequences. But has not the ordinary law of the land made ample provision to bring into its clutches those who invade the liberty of others? Why then have recourse to laws meant for totally different

conditions. If the existing law does not suffice, necessary amendments can be made. To pursue a policy of wholesale respiration by utilizing the Criminal Law Amendment and the Seditious Meeting Act will, I am afraid, make matters worse. The policy has defeated its own end and as such could be abandoned.'

J.B. Bhargava from Ambala Division gave his opinion in support of the resolution. In fact a situation of great delicacy and difficulty has arisen, in which leniency in the application of these measures looks like weakness and is regarded by the people as such, and stringency in enforcing them spells unalloyed tyranny. These measures, like other repressive measures, in all climes and ages, are sure to defeat their own ends, and the sooner they are withdrawn, the better it is for all concerned.

Girdharilal Agarwala representing Agra Division also supported the resolution. 'What good has happened by arresting and putting into jail so many Indians, some of whom are highly respected in the country even by those who do not agree with them in their political creed? One result which everybody can see is that Jail life has lost all terror and humiliation. At the time of going to jail people are cheered and garlanded. Khilafat and Congress volunteer organisations which have been declared illegal are swelling from day-to-day. If you arrest 10, you find 20 taking their place. Sometimes a larger number of persons enter the prison vans than are actually wanted, as if they were going to a sacred place. How many persons can you imprison?

'Please remember: Do not treat those who are at present opposed to you in such a way that their future cooperation with you will become impossible. Please remember what a Wazir said to a king who had first ill-treated him and then tried to reconcile him by presenting him with pearls: *'Dilra shakistai na ke gohar shakistai'* (You have broken the heart and not the pearls.)

S.P. Bajpai argued, 'Sir, I think the Viceroy should not hesitate to invite Mr. Gandhi to a Conference of this nature, and I still hope that Mahatma Gandhi will agree to suspend his activities and sit at the Conference and discuss ways and means to bring about the possibility of an honourable settlement.



H.A.J. Gidney opined, 'I earnestly appeal to both sides to forgive and forget, to call a truce, to put forward their best intellect shorn of any ideas of victor and vanquished but controlled and regulated by hearts beating in union, and then, verily, shall we visualise rightly and trace the path, however narrow it may be, leading to the realization of constitutional 'Swaraj' for our country, India—the hope of unrequited years.'

Tej Bahadur Sapru opposed the resolution and argued thus 'I will read out to you, from a document which I have before me, some of the instructions that have been issued. First of all, we have instructed Local Government that, where possible, trials should be conducted in open courts though it is realised that in many cases this is not possible. Secondly, we have suggested that the utmost care should be taken to see that evidence is recorded in full and that all legal formalities are strictly complied with in all trials; further that, when there is any doubt as to the legality or justice of a conviction, the Local Government should review the sentences passed in consultation with their legal advisers. Thirdly, we have drawn their attention to the sentences awarded for similar offences in different provinces and suggested that sentences should be carefully examined to ensure that where punishment is awarded, the sentence should not be unduly severe. We have also asked the Local Government to consider the circumstances under which rigorous imprisonment should be inflicted upon these offenders and suggested to them that they should make it clear, particularly in the case of minor offenders, that the Government are anxious to vindicate the authority of the law rather than to the offenders punished with undue severity. Finally, we have said that it may be necessary for various reasons, to limit the number of prosecutions. But I would respectfully venture to point out to you that in politics, it is not the idea which matters so much as the method by which you carry out that idea. Is this the way to achieve Self-government, to attain Home Rule or to acquire *Swaraj*? It is for you to decide. So far as my limited reading of history goes, so far as my limited experience in politics is concerned, I venture to think that howsoever you may attain *Swaraj*, you will not and you cannot attain *Swaraj* through non-cooperation, and if really you want *Swaraj*, will you achieve it through peaceful

means by maintaining peace and order in the country, or by creating confusion and anarchy in the country? I leave the question to be answered by the Assembly by its votes.

Jamnadas Dwarakadas opposed the resolution and stated 'If Government resorts to exceptional measures in order to put down a legitimate movement which is launched for the purpose of bringing about a state of affairs which would satisfy the political aspirations of the people, then I would agree that the Government is putting down by repressive measures a legitimate movement. But if Government puts down a movement or tries to put down a movement, which is it must be remembered, not a constitutional movement which aims at getting the grievances of the country constitutionally redressed, but which aims, in the words of the author of the movement, at the overthrow of the Government, which says openly that the non cooperators have declared war against the Government, which openly declares that the adherents of the movement—I am quoting the words of the author of the movement—are rebels and have nothing to do with Government: if measures are taken to repress that movement in order that peace to the country maybe secured, I submit, although I am not lawyer, that it is not a repressive measure, it is not a repressive policy on the part of Government.

'Events here and there, took which clearly indicated that if repressive measures were not taken by the Government, in my own words, as I said in September in Simla, the day was not far when what happened in Malabar would probably be happening in almost every part of the country.

'What happened in Bomday? Sir, I wish I could convey to the House in adequate terms like slightest notion of the terrible things that took place in Bomday. Women's honour in Bombay was not safe. I do not want to shock the House by telling them that women were treated in a most shameful and unmentionable way in the streets of Bombay. The lives of there police constables were taken under the nose of Mr. Gandhi The wife of our Honourable and esteemed colleague, our Deputy President, was one of those who, although she was stoned and badly stoned escaped coming entirely under the worthy of the non-

cooperators. I wish I could describe the agony of Mr. Gandhi's soul during those two days. Unfortunately, Sir, for this country, Mr. Gandhi has a short memory. When things happened during 1919, which shocked him, he admitted this mistake and said that he had made a Himalayan miscalculation. Things happened in Malabar. Malabar was too far away from him. He could not visualise the innumerable suffering of the people of the place. When things happened under his own nose in Bombay, he felt the agony, which I cannot adequately convey to you, Sir; I want to ask this House whether they consider that having seen things happening in Bombay, the Government of India or the Provincial Government would have been wise to watch with folded hands the preparations which were likely to bring about the same or even worse results in other provinces.

'The clear course before the Government and before us, responsible men, is either to support the Government in putting down a movement which we all know definitely, if it continues, is fraught with the gravest disaster for this country, or weekly, for fear that we might lose popularity with our people, for fear that our countrymen might blame us, to support that movement and be a party in inviting what I consider is going to be the ruin of this country. The time has come when it is not a question of supporting foreign Government to put down disorder in the country. You have to choose between Government of any kind on the one hand and on the other hand anarchy, chaos, disorder which will for centuries give a set-back to the progress of this country.'

Maulvi Abdul Kasem of Dacca opposed the resolution. 'I do believe, that this programme of Mr. Gandhi, as set out by him in clear terms, is a set-back in the progress of the country, retards it and brings the country to wreck and ruin. It will be found that the people who went hankering after jail were three times as much as those who got it. Sir, what is the reason for this craze for being jail-birds. The crux is because the dictum has gone forth that a man cannot be a patriot, a saviour of this country and a lover of the nation, unless he once visits His Majesty's jail, and nobody has a right to speak on behalf of the country unless he has one conviction to prove against him. If that is the mentality, what is the Government to do?

'Sir, while you say that you condemn this aggressiveness and that violence on the part of the non-cooperators, you ask the Government to tie its hands while the non-cooperators use all the machinery of war which they have in their armoury.

P.S. Sivaswami Aiyer opposed the resolution in these words, 'I do not think that there is any difference of opinion among us as regards the necessity for fighting this non-cooperation movement and for combating its mischievous effects by all means in the power of the Government. The next issue which is really one which directly arises upon this proposition is whether the steps which have been taken by Government for the enforcement of law and order are such as to command themselves to our judgement. Now, in connection with this matter, let me acknowledge with gratitude the patience and forbearance which the Government have exercised towards this movement of Mr. Gandhi. I do not believe that any other Government would have exercised the same patience and forbearance towards Mr. Gandhi. I do not believe that we shall ever enjoy the same liberty of speech that we enjoy under the present Government, not even under the Gandhi regime, of which we have had an ample foretaste already. If coming events cast their shadows before, the amounts of tyranny that is exercised upon individuals by the non-cooperators fill us with apprehensions as to what is in store for us under the Gandhi regime.'

William Vincent argued, We believed the movement was, as it is, intrinsically unsound. We hoped that this view would appeal to the majority of the people in this country and that the moderate party would use their influence to disabuse the people of the harmful and foolish proposals put forward by Mr. Gandhi and his followers. The policy of Government has not changed; it is the action of Mr. Gandhi and his followers which has compelled Government to a more vigorous application of a policy always designed to maintain law and order.

The motion was negatived by 20 votes, 33 in favour and 53 against it.

## COMMENTS ON GANDHI'S LETTER<sup>11</sup>

The Manifesto is sued by Mr. Gandhi on the 4th February justifying his determination to resort to mass civil disobedience contains a series of misstatements. Some of these are so important that the Government of India cannot allow them to pass unchallenged. In the first place, they emphatically repudiate the statement that they have embarked on a policy of lawless repression and also the suggestion that the present campaign of civil disobedience has been forced on the non-cooperation party in order to secure the elementary rights of free association, free speech and of free press.

*In limine*, the Government of India desire to draw attention to the fact that the decision to adopt a programme of civil disobedience was finally accepted on the 4th November before the recent notifications relating either to the Seditious Meetings Act or the Criminal Law Amendment Act of which Mr. Gandhi unmistakably refers, were issued. It was in consequence of the serious acts of lawlessness committed by persons who professed to be followers to Mr. Gandhi and the non-cooperation movement that the Government were forced to take measures which are in strict accordance with the law for protection of peaceful citizens in the pursuit of their lawful avocations. Since the inauguration of the non-cooperation movement the Government of India, actuated by a desire to avoid anything in the nature of recrudescence of political activity even though it was of an extreme character, have restricted their actions in relation thereto to such measures as were necessary for the maintenance of law and order and the preservation of public tranquillity.

Up to November no steps, save in Delhi last year, were taken against the Volunteer Associations. In November, however, the Government were confronted with a new and dangerous situation. In the course of the past year there had been systematic attempts to tamper with the loyalty of the soldiers and the police and there had occurred numerous outbreaks of serious disorder directly attributable to the propaganda of the non-cooperation party amongst the ignorant

and excitable masses. These outbreaks had resulted in grave loss of life, the growth of a dangerous spirit of lawlessness and an increasing disregard for lawful authority. In November they culminated in the grave riots in Bombay in which 53 persons lost their lives and approximately 400 were wounded. On the same date, dangerous manifestations of lawlessness occurred in many other places and at this period it became clear that many of the Volunteer Associations had embarked on a systematic campaign of violence, intimidation and obstruction to combat which proceedings under the Penal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure had proved ineffective.

In these circumstances the Government were reluctantly compelled to resort to measures of a more comprehensive and drastic character.

Nevertheless the operation of the Seditious Meetings Act was strictly limited to a few districts in which the risk of grave disturbances of the peace was specially great and the application of the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1908 was confined to associations, the majority of the members of which had habitually indulged in violence and intimidation. It is impossible here to set out in details the evidence which justified the adoption of these measures in the different provinces. Abundant proof is, however, to be found in the published proceedings of the various legislative bodies, in the *communiqués* of different local Government, and in the pronouncements of the heads of provinces. While resolute in their determination to enforce respect for law and order and to protect loyal and peaceful subjects of the Crown, the Government have at the same time taken every precaution possible to mitigate where desirable the conditions of imprisonment and to avoid any action which might have the appearance of vindictive severity. Ample proof of this will be found in the orders issued by local governments. Numerous offenders have been released, sentences have been reduced and special consideration has been shown in the case of persons convicted of offences under the Seditious Meetings Act or the Criminal Law Amendment Act. There is then no shadow of justification for the charge that their policy has been one of indiscriminate and lawless repression.

A further charge which has been brought by Mr. Gandhi is that the recent measures of Government have involved a departure from the civilized policy laid down by His Excellency at the time of the apology of the Ali Brothers. Namely, that the Government of India should not interfere with the activities of non-cooperation so long as they remained non-violent in word and deed. The following citation from the *communiqué* of the Government of India issued on the 30th May conclusively disapproves the statement. After explaining that in view of the solemn undertaking contained in the statement over their signatures, it had been decided to refrain from instituting criminal proceedings against Messrs. Mohamed Ali and Shaukat Ali, the Government of India observed: 'It must be inferred from the original determination of the Government to prosecute for speeches inciting to violence the promoting disaffection of a less violent character is not an offence against the law. The Government of India desire to make it plain that they will enforce the law relating to offences against the State as and when they may think fit against any persons who have committed breaches of it.

It remains with the Government of India to deal with the allegation that His Excellency summarily rejected the proposal for a conference although the terms put forward by the Conference at Bombay and accepted by the Working Committee of the Congress were "quite in keeping with His Excellency's own requirements as indicated in his speech at Calcutta". How far this is far from being the case will be manifested from a comparison of His Excellency's speech with the terms proposed by the Conference. His Excellency in that speech insisted on the imperative necessity as a fundamental condition precedent to the discussion of any question by a conference, of the discontinuance of the unlawful activities of the non-cooperation party. No assurance on this point was, however, contained in the proposals advanced by the Conference. On the contrary whilst the Government were asked to make concessions which not only included the withdrawal of the notifications under the Criminal Law Amendments and Seditious Meetings Acts and the release of persons convicted thereunder, but also the release

of the persons convicted of offences designed to effect the loyalty of the army and the submission to an arbitration committee of the cases of their persons convicted under the ordinary law of the land, there was no suggestion that any of the illegal activities of the non-cooperators other than Hartals, picketing and civil disobedience should cease. Moreover, it was evident from the statements made by Gandhi at the Conference that he intended to continue the enrolment of volunteers in prohibited association and the preparations for civil disobedience. Further Mr. Gandhi also made it apparent that the proposed Round Table Conference would be called merely to register his decrees. It is idle to suggest that terms of this character fulfilled in any way the essentials laid down by His Excellency or can reasonably be described as having been made in response to the sentiments expressed by him.

Finally, the Government of India desire to draw attention to the demands put forward in the concluding paragraph of Mr. Gandhi's present manifesto which exceeded even the demands made by the Working Committee of the Congress. Mr. Gandhi's demands now include, (1) the release of all prisoners convicted of under trial for non-violent activities (2) a guarantee that the Government will refrain from interference with all non-violent activities of the non-cooperation party, even though they fall within the purview of the Indian Penal Code or in other words an undertaking the Government will indefinitely hold in abeyance in regard to the non-cooperators the ordinary and the long established law of the land. In return for these concessions he indicates that he intends to continue the illegal and seditious propaganda and operations of the non-cooperation party and merely offers to postpone civil disobedience of an aggressive character until the offenders now in jail have had an opportunity of reviewing the whole situation. In the same paragraph he reaffirms the unalterable character of the demands of the party.

The Government of India are confident that all right thinking citizens will recognize that this manifesto constitutes no response whatever to the speech of His Excellency at Calcutta and the demands made are such as no Government could



discuss much less accept. The alternatives that now confront the people of India are such as sophistry can no longer obscure or disguise. The issue is no longer between this or that programme of political advance but between lawlessness with all its dangerous consequences on the one hand, and on the other, the maintenance of those principles which lie at the root of all civilized governments. Mass civil disobedience is fright with such dangers to the State that must be met with sternness and severity. The Government entertain no doubt that in any measures which they have to take for its suppression they can count on the support and assistance of all law-abiding and loyal citizens of His Majesty.

### **SPOOR'S VIEWS ON MOVEMENT<sup>12</sup>**

Spoor, a prominent member of House of Commons pleaded for Gandhian movement thus: '.... There was no attempt made at all events in all that we have heard so far, to meet what some of us regard as the legitimate demands of the Indian people... It is extremely difficult for those of us who have been reared amid the purely materialistic philosophies of the West, to understand, even dimly, the reasoning of the Eastern mind. Longer mental perspective than are possible in the fresh and hurry of modern politics are required, and temperamental sympathies which, in the main, are alien to us. So it is that this non-cooperation movement is very largely misunderstood by its Western critics, but we do not get over it by calling it fanatical. We certainly shall not suppress it by imprisoning a few thousands of its leaders. The prison has not yet been built that will enclose an idea for very long the gun is not forged yet that can destroy a will, however it may manifest itself, that is really making for freedom. I know that some people imagine that it may be possible to raise a dam that will hold the current in check; but the higher you raise your dam the greater becomes the pressure that is behind it. The great danger is that some day the dam will burst, as certainly some day in India the gaol doors will have to be opened.

'You are dealing in India with a terrible force and almost superhuman. The policy of blood and iron can no more bring peace in India than it brought peace in Ireland. It has never

brought peace in any country in the world yet. You cannot defeat non-cooperation by it. Personally, I should like to see it defeated, but not by the methods that are being employed by Government of India backed by the British Government in this country. You can defeat non-cooperation by practising cooperation. When I say that, I mean the willing, ungraudging cooperation of British and Indian on absolutely equal terms in the maintenance of a commonwealth jointly enjoyed.

I do ask the Government really to make an attempt of face the real issue. Instead of trying to understany Gandhi we put him in jail. Such a policy and such approval as it apparently has in this House in certain quarters is a confession of hopeless incompetence. Gandhi rightly understood, is far less an isolated leader than the incarnation of what is undoubtedly the popular will? Whether we agree with him or not does not concern my argument, but through Gandhi the hopes of millions of Indians are finding utterance. We may disagree with his ideas entirely, but it is a profound mistake to imagine that they are merely personal. The sole effect of his imprisonment is to stimulate feelings of bitterness which will ruin all possibility of a peaceful issue of this great struggle. The supremacy of British authority has been vindicated. Yes; and India is practically bankrupt. The Lancashire cotton trade is in peril. Indeed, the economic effects of this conflict are as bad as the political ones.

‘Unless there is a rapid change in the whole temper of the relations of Britain and India, India will be lost to Britain and Britain will be lost to India, and no one here can possibly imagine the magnitude of such a disaster as that... I submit, further, that the practical solution of this difficulty is not so terribly hard after all. India simply wants to be master in her own house, and until she is master in her own house there will be no peace.’

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## CHAPTER : 6

# Emphasis on Non-violence

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### PLEA FOR NON-VIOLENCE<sup>1</sup>

I had a great desire to come to decay when Maulana Shaukat Ali last visited this place. Today I feel a great deal of pleasure in coming here. I am sorry that this is the first time that I feel that my voice is breaking down.

This Government has done a very great injustice to the Indians. It has acted treacherously with our Muslim brothers Every Indian knows that in the Punjab, the Indians were made to crawl on their bellies. Many innocent men have been sentenced to death by the judges of the Punjab and a great many were sent to jail A great injustice was done to our students in the Punjab. Small children were ordered to make salaams four times I myself think it a sin to be loyal to a Government which has done such a great injustice to us Every Indian who loves freedom would feel just as I do It would be his duty to destroy this Government or rectify it. I am not sorry because my voice fails but you should know that the work you are going to do does not need the use of your voice Two things are incumbent upon us: to convene meetings and pass some resolutions: and to bring the latter into practice. The opportunity has appeared before us and the greater part of our work should be practical. We should now give up processions, for we have hitherto seen that they have been of no use to us in India We are lacking in the power of management. *Hindu Mussulman ki jai*<sup>2</sup> is to my consideration, a kind of prayer to God. *Bandemataram*<sup>3</sup> is prayer offered to *Bharat Mata*<sup>4</sup> The *Sangit*<sup>5</sup> or our Bengali brothers is so powerful that the like of it cannot be found in India. If you want to worship your country loyally, you should learn what they teach. In my consideration, this education would be spread among the common people. For

last 35 years we have been receiving the degenerate education with the result that are 35 years back in progress. Our late Dadabhai Naoroji wrote<sup>6</sup> that the expenditure of soldiers and of railways was daily increasing. The trade of India had been made so much worse that crores of rupees were every year going away abroad. The Rowlatt Act, the Press Act,<sup>7</sup> the compulsion of students and the unveiling of women had never been seen during the time of Dadabhai Naoroji. If you say that we have been favoured with the Council and that Lord Sinha has been appointed Governor of Bihar, then I would tell you that your slavery has now become complete. India is much worse than what she was 50 years back. The people of India are more cowardly than they were 50 years back. They had strength to draw swords 50 years back, but now they have become weaker. It is very difficult to liberate India from the bond of slavery. The Muslims have been seduced to go abroad and made to fight against the Turks and output Mesopotamia. Our Government solaced us with the Reform Scheme and at the same time passed the Rowlatt Act. Events happened in India which caused Indians to rub their noses in the dust of disgrace. India can never forge the services that Mr. C.R. Das rendered while working with me in the Congress Committee of the Punjab<sup>9</sup> along with other fellow-workers such as Pandit Madam Mohan Malaviya, Motilal Nehru, Harkishen Lal, Lala Girdharilal and Jayakar. When the report<sup>10</sup> came out, I accepted the minimum and took an oath that either I would grow fearful or destroy this Government. We have not been able to set aside the pension of a degenerate ruler<sup>11</sup> who has ruined the Punjab. I have made friends with the two brothers, Shaukat Ali and Mohamed Ali and promised before my Indian brethren that I will fight on their side and sacrifice my life till the demands of my Muslim brethren are satisfied. I will give up my life for the sake of Khilafat. Our religion does not teach us to cut the throats of Englishmen with our swords. If we could have used our swords in India, these men, Mohamed Ali and Shaukat Ali, would never have remained silent. They have sheathed their swords in order to render good to the Muslim community. The movement that is before you is non-cooperation. If you want to free India within a years—when I spoke “a year”, I did not say it is jest—adopt it. India needs only one lesson to learn, and

that is, not to be afraid. When she has learnt that, I would then understand that India has become independent. Your actions should now be practical. The two words "non-violent" and "progressive" are part and parcel of non-cooperation. We do not now possess so much strength that we can approach the cultivators and tell them not to pay taxes or ask a soldier to leave his service. We will use swords, when the time will come. He who does not draw the sword at the proper time is a fool and he who uses his sword at an improper time is also impudent. The problem non-cooperation is before you. Indians need to remember only one thing, and that is, they should expel fear from their minds. If you do this, you will then think that India has become free. I am overwhelmed with grief when I think how very cowardly Indians have grown. Let Indians give up fear only for five years.

You cannot dispense with the two words "non-violent" and "progressive" that have been attached to the word "non-cooperation". If the people of India accept this, they will not only sacrifice their voice but their life and property, too. If our leaders go to India title holders, pleaders, students and councillors and appeal to them, it is my firm belief that they will condescend to undergo a sacrifice and will think that God is the only Being who feels them and that Government, the courts and the Councils are not their gods. If you do this there will be no necessity of going to peasants and soldiers. The Mohammedans will then be able to save not only Islam but India, too. I congratulate the people of India in general and of Bengal in particular for the work they have done in connection with votes. We shall work with patience which can win over Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and other leaders, including our brother Surendranath Banerjea, to our side.

We should work peacefully. I cannot think that intimidation can succeed in inducing our brethren to join hands with us. It gave me much pain when I learnt that night-soil was thrown over a candidate and the ear of a voter was chopped off. Certainly those were most dirty deeds. We should approach our brethren most courteously, appeal to their hearts and try to win over their hearts by means of love and kindness. If you work in this manner with patience and perseverance, I can assure you that within one year, five months from now, India

must become independent and the Muslims will surely free Islam from danger. I appeal to the students to think over the Punjab affairs and the condition of Islam, and if you do so. You will find that this rule is a Satanic rule, this Raj is *Ravanarajya*.<sup>12</sup> If you are told that you will be given free education, even you should not go to the schools of Ravana which are full of Satanic things. I do not call any Englishman a Satan. I love Englishmen in the same way as I love Mr. Shaukat Ali and Mr. Das. But what I say is this, that this Administration is Satanic. If God gives me enough power, I will rectify this Government or end it, I will not rest until I have mended this Government. I know full well that today I am violating the Seditious Act (*sic*) of the Government. I am a loyal subject of this Government and I am also its loyal friend and as such I tell the Government to reform itself or be destroyed. I will take part in its destruction and I invite you, too, to join with me. Either we will mend this Government or destroy it. I cannot live to see the black disgrace by Englishmen with impunity. I want to meet Englishmen in the open field and tell them that we too, do possess the same amount of strength as they do

I wish to tell my student friends that it would be a regrettable thing if you do not understand my simple Hindustani. This shows how far we have become degenerated. This Government has acted treacherously with us. You have realized this and you should leave the educational institutions unconditionally.

### **CRITICISM OF CHAURI CHAURA TRAGEDY<sup>13</sup>**

God has been abundantly kind to me. He has warned me the third time that there is not as yet in India that truthful and non-violent atmosphere which and which alone can justify mass disobedience which can be at all described as civil, which means gentle, truthful, humble, knowing, wilful yet loving, never criminal and hateful

He warned me in 1919 when the Rowlatt Act agitation was started. Ahmedabad, Viramgam, and Kheda erred; Amritsar and Kasur erred. I retraced my steps, called it a Himalayan miscalculation, humbled myself before God and man, and

stopped not merely mass civil disobedience but even my own which I knew was intended to be civil and non-violent.

The next time it was through the events of Bombay that God gave a terrific warning. He made me eyewitness of the deeds of the Bombay mob on the 17th November. The mob acted in the interest of non-cooperation. I announced my intention to stop the mass civil disobedience which was to be immediately started in Bardoli. The humiliation was greater than in 1919. But it did me good. I am sure that the nation gained by the stopping. India stood for truth and non-violence by the suspension.

But the bitterest humiliation was still to come. Madras did give the warning, but heeded it not. But God spoke clearly through Chauri Chaura. I understand that the constables who were so brutally hacked to death had given much provocation. They had even gone back the word just given by the Inspector that they would not be molested, but when the procession had passed the stragglers were interfered with and abused by the constables. The former cried out for help. The mob returned. The constables opened fire. The little ammunition they had was exhausted and they retired to the *Thana*<sup>14</sup> for safety. The mob, my informant tells me, therefore set fire to the *Thana*. The self-imprisoned constables had to come out for dear life and as they did so, they were hacked to pieces and the mangled remains were thrown into the raging flames.

It is claimed that no non-cooperation volunteer had a hand in the brutality and that the mob had not only the immediate provocation but they had also general knowledge of the high-handed tyranny of the police in that district. No provocation can possibly justify the brutal murder of men who had been rendered defenceless and who had virtually thrown themselves on the mercy of the mob. And when India claims to be non-violent and hopes to mount the throne of Liberty through non-violent means, mob-violence even in answer to grave provocation is a bad augury. Suppose the "non-violent" disobedience of Bardoli was permitted by God to succeed, the Government had abdicated in favour of the victory of Bardoli, who would control the unruly element that must be expected to perpetrate inhumanity upon due provocation? Non-violent attainment of self-government presupposes a non-violent control



over the hooligans of India; in other words, when the latter also have learnt periodically or religiously to refrain from their violent activities at least whilst the campaign of non-cooperation is going on. The tragedy of Chauri Chaura, therefore, roused me thoroughly.

"But what about your manifesto to the Viceroy and your rejoinder to his reply?" spoke the voice of Satan. It was the buttrest cup of humiliation to drink. "Surely it is cowardly to withdraw the next day after pompous threats to the Government and promises to the people of Bardoli." Thus Satan's invitation was to deny the Truth and, therefore Religion, to deny God Himself. I put my doubts and troubles before the Working Committee and other associates whom I found near me. They did not all agree with me at first. Some of them probably do not even now agree with me. But never has a man been blessed, perhaps, with colleagues and associates so considerate and forgiving as I have. They understood my difficulty and patiently followed my argument. The result is before the public in the shape of the resolutions of the Working Committee. The drastic reversal of practically the whole of the aggressive programme may be politically unsound and unwise, but there is no doubt that it is religiously sound, and I venture to assure the doubters that the country will have gained by my humiliation and confession of error.

The only virtue I want to claim is Truth and Non-violence. I lay no claim to superhuman powers. I want none. I wear the same corruptible flesh that the weakest of my fellow beings wears and am, therefore as liable to err as any. My services have many limitations, but God has up to now blessed them in spite of the imperfections.

For, confession of error is like a broom that sweeps away dirt and leaves the surface cleaner than before, I feel stronger for my confession. And the cause must prosper for the retracing. Never has man reached his destination by persistence in deviation from the straight path

It has been urged that Chauri Chaura cannot affect Bardoli. There is danger, it is argued only if Bardoli is weak enough to be swayed by Chauri Chaura and is betrayed into violence. I have no doubt, whatsoever on that account. The people of

Bardoli are in my opinion the most peaceful in India. But Bardoli is but a speck on the map of India. Its effort cannot succeed unless there is perfect cooperation from the other parts. Bardoli's disobedience will be civil only when the other parts of India remain non-violent. Just as the addition of a grain of arsenic to a pot of milk renders it unfit as food so will the civility of Bardoli prove unacceptable by the addition of the deadly poison from Chauri Chaura. The latter represents India as much as Bardoli.

Chauri Chaura is after all an aggravated symptom. I have never imagined that there has been no violence, mental or physical, in the places where repression is going on. Only I have believed. I still believe and the pages of *Young India* amply prove, that the repression is out of all proportion to the insignificant popular violence in the areas of repression. The determined holding of meetings in prohibited areas I do not call violence. The violence I am referring to is the throwing of brickbats or intimidation and coercion practised in stray cases. As a matter of fact in civil disobedience there should be no excitement. Civil disobedience is a preparation for mute suffering. Its effect is marvellous though unperceptive and gentle, but I regarded a certain amount of excitement as inevitable, certain amount of unintended violence even pardonable, i.e., I did not consider civil disobedience impossible in somewhat imperfect conditions. Under perfect conditions disobedience when civil is hardly felt. But the present movement is admittedly a dangerous experiment under fairly adverse conditions.

The tragedy of Chauri Chaura is really the index finger. It shows the way India may easily go if drastic precautions be not taken. If we are not to evolve violence out of non-violence, it is quite clear that we must heartily retrace our steps and re-establish an atmosphere of peace, rearrange our programme and not think of starting mass civil disobedience until we are sure of peace being retained in spite of mass civil disobedience being started and in spite of Government provocation. We must be sure of unauthorized portions not string mass civil disobedience.

As it is, the Congress organization is still imperfect and its instructions are still perfunctorily carried out. We have not

established Congress Committees in every one of the villages. Where we have, they are not perfectly amenable to our instructions. We have not probably more than one crore of members on the roll. We are in the middle of February, yet not many have paid the annual four-anna subscription for the current year. Volunteers are indifferently enrolled. They do not conform to all the conditions of their pledge. They do not even wear hand-spun and hand-woven *khaddar*. All the Hindu volunteers have not yet purged themselves of the sin of untouchability. All are not free from the taint of violence. Not by their imprisonment are we going to win *Swaraj* or serve the holy cause of the Khilafat or attain the ability to stop payment to faithless servants. Some of us err in spite of ourselves. But some others among us sin wilfully. They join Volunteer Corps well knowing that they are not and do not intend to remain non-violently. We are thus untruthful even as we hold the Government to be untruthful. We dare not enter the kingdom of Liberty with mere lip homage to Truth and Non-violence.

Suspension of mass civil disobedience and subsidence of excitement are necessary for further progress, indeed indispensable to prevent further retrogression. I hope, therefore, that by suspension every Congressman or woman will not only not feel disappointed but he or she will feel relieved of the burden of unreality and of national sin.

Let the opponent glory in our humiliation or so called defeat. It is better to be charged with cowardice and weakness than to be guilty of denial of our oath and sin against God. It is a million times better to *appear* untrue before the world than to *be* untrue to ourselves.

And so, for me the suspension of mass civil disobedience and other minor activities that were calculated to keep up excitement is not enough penance for my having been the instrument, however involuntary, of the brutal violence by the people at Chauri Chaura.

I must undergo personal cleansing. I must become a fitter instrument able to register the slightest variation in the moral atmosphere about me. My prayers must have much deeper truth and humility about them than they evidence. And for me

there is nothing so helpful and cleansing as a fast accompanied by the necessary mental cooperation.

I know that the metal attitude is everything. Just as a prayer may be merely a mechanical intonation as of a bird, so may a fast be a mere mechanical torture of the flesh. Such mechanical contrivances are valueless for the purpose intended. Again just as a mechanical chant may result in the modulation of voice, a mechanical fast may result in purifying the body. Neither will touch the soul within.

But a fast undertaken for fuller self-expression for attainment of the spirit's supremacy over the flesh, is a most powerful factor in one's evolution. After deep consideration, therefore, I am imposing on myself a five days' continuous fast, permitting myself water. It commenced on Sunday evening; it ends on Friday evening. This is the least I must do.

I have taken into consideration the All India Congress Committee meeting in front of me. I have in mind the anxious pain even the five day's fast will cause many friends; but I can no longer postpone the penance nor lessen it.

I urge co-workers not to copy my example. The motive in their case will be lacking. They are not the originators of civil disobedience. I am in the unhappy position of a surgeon proved skill less to deal with an admittedly dangerous case. I must either abdicate or acquire greater skill. Whilst the personal penance is not only necessary but obligatory on me, the exemplary self-restraint prescribed by the Working Committee is surely sufficient penance for everyone else. It is no small penance and, if sincerely carried out, it can become definitely more real and better than fasting. What can be richer and more fruitful than a greater fulfilment of the vow of non-violence in thought, word, and deed or the spread of that spirit? It will be more than food for me during the week to observe that comrades are all, silently and without idle discussion, engaged in fulfilling the constructive programme sketched by the Working Committee, in enlisting Congress members after making sure that they understand the Congress creed of truth and non-violence for the attainment of *Swaraj*, in daily and religiously spinning for a fixed time, in introducing the wheel of prosperity and freedom in every home, in visiting

“untouchable” homes and finding out their wants, in inducing national schools to receive “untouchable” children, in organizing social service specially designed to find a common platform for every variety of man and woman, and in visiting the homes which the drink curse is delousing, in establishing real *panchayats* and in organizing national schools on a proper footing. The workers will be better engaged in these activities than in fasting. I hope, therefore, that no one will join me in fasting, either through false sympathy or an ignorant conception of the spiritual value of fasting.

All fasting and all penance must as far as possible be secret. But my fasting is both a penance and a punishment, and a punishment has to be public. It is penance for me and punishment for those whom I try to serve, for whom I love to live and would equally love to die. They have unintentionally sinned against the laws of the Congress though they were sympathizers if not actually connected with it. Probably they hacked the constables—their countrymen and fellow beings with my name on their lips. The only way love punishes is by suffering. I cannot even wish them to be arrested. But I would let them know that I would suffer for their breach of the Congress creed. I would advise those who feel guilty and repentant to hand themselves voluntarily to the Government for punishment and make a clean confession. I hope that the workers in the Gorakhpur district will leave no stone unturned to find out the evil-doers and urge them to deliver themselves into custody. But whether the murderers accept my advice or not, I would like them to know that they have seriously interfered with Swaraj operations, that in being the cause of the postponement of the movement in Barodoli, they have injured the very cause they probably intended to serve. I would like them to know, too, that this movement is not a cloak or a preparation for violence. I would, at any rate, suffer every humiliation, every torture, absolute ostracism and death itself to prevent the movement from becoming volunteer a procures or of violence. I make my penance public also because I am now denying myself the opportunity of sharing their lot with the prisoners. We can no longer press for the withdrawal of notifications or discharge of prisoners. They and we must suffer for the crime of Chauri Chaura. The incident proves,

whether we wish it or no, the unity of life. All, including even the administrators, must suffer. Chauri Chaura must stiffen the Government, must still further corrupt the police, and the reprisals that will follow must further demoralize the people. The suspensions and the penance will take us back to the positions we occupied before the tragedy. By strict discipline and purification we regain the moral confidence required for demanding the withdrawal of notifications and the discharge of prisoners.

If we learn the full lesson of the tragedy, we can turn the curse into a blessing. By becoming truthful and non-violent, both in spirit and deed, and by making the Swadeshi i.e., the khaddar programme complete, we can establish full Swaraj and redress the Khilafat and the Punjab wrongs without a single person have to offer civil disobedience.

### IEWS ON NON-VIOLENCE<sup>15</sup>

**Q.** *Have you resolved on any definite programme of activity on your own part in the immediate or near future?*

**A.** If your question refers to my personal programme, for the time being I propose to remain in Bardoli and watch the effect upon all the people of the contractive programme placed before them by the Working Committee, which, I am hoping, will be accepted by the All India Congress Committee. There is enough work and enough variety for every real worker, but you will notice that it resolves itself into two things: spread of non-violence and spread of khaddar. The one is to mark a definite inward change and the other to make a definite outward advance. India cannot hold her own against the world without non-violence, and she cannot become economically free without the universal adoption of the spinning wheel.

**Q.** *Do you mean to go on any tour of India in the near future?*

**A.** So far as I can see, not in the immediate future except that I shall have to go to Delhi to attend the All-India Congress Committee meeting.

**Q.** *People say that you will be compelled by circumstances to abandon all political activities and devote the rest of your life*

*to tackling social problems like untouchability, intemperance and so on. Is there any such likelihood?*

**A.** Not so far as I can see the present temper of the nation. In spite of the aberrations which I have noted India's has become solidly non-violent. I think, both the classes and the masses, and so long as Congressmen continue to endorse the programme laid down and not reject the gospels of non-violence and the spinning-wheel, I am not likely to abandon my present vocation. For me there is no distinction between politics and religion. Politics are a sham without a religious backing; and if I am today immersed in the political life of the country it is because politics, i.e., the political conditions of the country are the predominant part of the national life. No advance is possible without touching the political life at one point or another,

*Q. In view of the danger of violence would it not be better to give up all ideas of mass civil disobedience and concentrate on items of less risk such as defiance of notifications under the Criminal Law Amendment Act and perfect the organization in at least one city, say Calcutta, and fill the jails?*

**A.** I do not think that it is necessary to give up the idea of mass civil disobedience. There is nothing wrong in the idea. It is not only not an immoral thing but it is a right of the people which can never be surrendered. It simply means that the masses should be trained to act non-violently. What is there wrong in that ideal? I confess that I am not going to embark upon mass civil disobedience hastily. I would want almost absolute assurances before I think next time of embarking upon mass disobedience myself. After all, the civil disobedience in South Africa was mass civil disobedience; there were no untoward incidents in that campaign. The disobedience in Kaira in 1918 was also mass civil disobedience and there was not a single instance of violence. Mass civil disobedience for the whole of India and in the name of India is merely an extension of a successful programme. I would certainly not have stopped the Bardoli programme had there been no danger of it being thoughtlessly copied by other parts of India. I am certain that in spite of outbreaks of violence in other parts of India, the people of Bardoli would have kept fully non-violent but that would not have served the national purpose. If Bardoli

had to offer mass civil disobedience for local grievances I would certainly not have been stopped.

**Q.** *If you can effect a breach in one place or break the whole chain. Will it not therefore, be advisable to concentrate on the fight for municipal rights and bring Government to its knees?*

**A.** You cannot do it through a single programme. It will certainly help. But to attain Swaraj through more municipal reform would be a slow process. I am certainly hoping that Ahmedabad and Surat will give a good account themselves and demonstrate the utter futility of the coercion which the Government of Bombay has thoughtlessly attempted and whilst, if Ahmedabad and Surat succeed, their success will indirectly help the national movement, it will not solve the question of Swaraj. Swaraj movement means mass education which you cannot impart directly through a few cities perfecting and achieving independent government. Indeed the disciplined opposition that Ahmedabad, Surat and Nadiad are pluckily offering has become possible because of the general awakening. When the experiment is completed and if it becomes successful, the people will see how the citizens of these three places will have shown grit, constructive ability, capacity for suffering and all other hobble qualities that go to make a nation great. But that experiment by itself cannot give India Swaraj within the time contemplated by the Congress programmes.

**Q.** *Are you going to organize municipal fight in Ahmedabad and Surat?*

**A.** I am not; but I am hoping that the citizens of both these places will not give up struggle which they have commenced in right earnest.

**Q.** *There is a class of people who have begun to think that your idea of India attaining a non-violent condition is Utopian; and they say that even if after two years's incessant effort on your behalf to teach non-violence to your countrymen the country becomes pacific and you begin your civil disobedience campaign, any single and act by a violent deed of political complexion can disturb the harmony. They add that you cannot expect all the 315 millions of the Indians to be non-violent even after centuries of preaching: "The great prophets like Buddha, Chaitanya,*



*Nanak, Kabir who preached only love and non-violence have not succeeded even after 2500 years in making India entirely non-violent. Violence is bound to exist so long [as] humanity is not raised to the condition of angels and saints. Even if the country remains quiet for a long period to come, what guarantee is there that oppression may not engender violence on the part of some individuals? The mobmind when outraged beyond control is bound to be inflamed and go mad. Should the whole country, for the crimes of a few individuals, set at rest the longing for Swaraj, a satisfying solution of the Khilafat and justice to the Punjab atrocities?"*

*In the face of such hard facts, is it not wise to accept violence as inevitable and only try to check it and not stamp it out completely from the surface of India? Many say that the risk will always be there and civil disobedience without such risk will never be practicable. They urge that you yourself said the choice is between lawless repression and mass civil disobedience with all its dangers. May I know what you have got to say in reply to this?*

**A.** This sermon in question betrays woeful ignorance of the struggle and the bearing of non-violence upon it. I do not mean you are ignorant. You are merely the mouthpiece for people who are sceptics. I should certainly despair of success if I attempted anything that Jesus, Buddha or Mohammed failed to achieve. On the contrary my attempt is exceedingly humble or simple. I do not believe that India cannot be taught to see the very simple truth that for their to think of attaining Swaraj by an armed conflict is an impossible dream for several generations. There is no country on the face of the earth so ill-fitted for an armed conflict as India. It may be that the forces of violence may not be sufficiently controlled in order to conduct a campaign of non-violent mass civil disobedience. If that is the conclusion at which all the leaders arrive it does not mean that India cannot attain her freedom by non-violent means. There are many forms of civil disobedience open to a Satyagrahi; but I confess that mass civil disobedience is the shortest cut. If it proves to be impossible I have no doubt that a milder programme of civil disobedience could be conceived so as to give the people a training in self-sacrifice. From this the masses will learn the law of suffering, in its application to the nation,

as they today practise for domestic affairs. There is certainly no Swaraj without going through the fire and suffering and it gladdens my heart to read reports that I daily receive of people undergoing incredible suffering without retaliation for the sake of the nation.

I have, therefore, absolutely no misgivings on the point. I am not trying to achieve the impossible. Violence there always will be, and I should not be perturbed by stray cases of violence. I have advised suspension of civil disobedience because the violence practised near Gorakhpur was not individual, not in connection with any private wrong but from a vague sense of political wrong. I do not despair of the people bearing the necessity of self-restraint on occasions such as at Chauri Chaura which led to popular violence. Under much graver provocation the masses have remained calm during the year almost all over India, as when public meetings have been forcibly broken up. These were all occasions for outbreak of mob fury but the people have kept exemplary restraint. I believe that slowly but surely the spirit of non-violence is spreading. It is really not so difficult or impracticable as the string of questions put to me suggests. The incident at Chauri Chaura would have been impossible if the Congress and the Khilafat organizations were perfect. It is all a question of perfecting the Congress organization. And it is the ABC of political science that you can do little unless you have got a fairly good organization. The Government succeeds because it can offer organized violence. The Congress will succeed when its organization which is based on non-violence is also perfected. The constructive programme mapped by the Working Committee is an attempt in that direction. It should also be remembered that non-violence being an organic charge can be organized in much less time than violence. Think of what India has done in the way of non-violence during the 18 months—calculate the generations that must elapse before you can teach India the use of arms.

*Q. Have you no fear that the machinery of Congress organization will be loosened and there will be absence of zeal on account of repeated disappointments?*

*A. I have absolutely no such fear for the simple reason that earnest workers must realize as they have realized already,*

that there must be in all organic growth constant adaptability to changes that take place in the environment.

*Q. Have you no fear, Mahatmaji, that as the result of the suspension people might lose faith in your principle of non-violence?*

**A.** I have none.

*Q. What about the prisoners at least 15,000 of whom have gone to jail in expectation of the early attainment of Swaraj? Will not that question alone drive you to discover some form of resistance at least to get them released?*

**A.** The issue has been changed by the Gorakhpur tragedy. The Congress must, for the time being, sacrifice the prisoners. They must suffer for the popular misdeeds at Gorakhpur.

*Q. Do you think the fanatical portion will not get out of hand through indefinite suspension of mass civil disobedience?*

**A.** I hope not. If the fanatical portion will get out of hand it will demonstrate lack of Congress discipline and, therefore, justify suspension of mass civil disobedience.

*Q. Do you now expect the Moderates to rally to the Congress in any appreciable numbers?*

**A.** I certainly hope that many Moderates will take the opportunity now offered of rallying round the Congress standard.

*Q. When the moment for beginning civil disobedience will arrive do you hope to commence it at Bardoli?*

**A.** If mass civil disobedience has ever to be embarked upon I am certainly expecting that the honour will be given to Bardoli. But I am hoping that by that time not merely Bardoli but many other places will be ready for self-sacrifice.

### **CLARIFICATION TO NEHRU<sup>16</sup>**

My dear Jawaharlal,

I see that all of you are terribly cut up over the resolutions<sup>17</sup> of the Working Committee. I sympathize with you, and my heart goes out to Father<sup>18</sup>. I can picture to myself the agony through which he must have passed but I also feel that this letter is unnecessary because I know that the first shock must have been followed by a true understanding of the situation

Let us not be obsessed by Devdas's youthful indiscretions. It is quite possible that the poor boy has been swept off his feet and that he has lost his balance, but the brutal murder of the constables by an infuriated crowd which was in sympathy with non-cooperation cannot be denied. Nor can it be denied that it was a politically-minded crowd. It would have been criminal not to have heeded such a clear warning.

I must tell you that this was the last straw. My letter<sup>19</sup> to the Viceroy was not sent without misgivings as its language must make it clear to anyone. I was much disturbed by the Madras doings, but I drowned the arnings voice. I received letters both from Hindus and Mohammedans from Calcutta, Allahabad and the Punjab, all these before the Gorakhpur incident, telling me that the wrong was not all on the Government side, that our people were becoming aggressive, defiant and threatening, that they were getting out of hand and were non-violent in demeanour. Whilst the Ferozepur Jirka incident is discreditable to the Government, we are not altogether without blame. Hakimji complained about Bareilly. I have bitter complaints about Jajjar. In Shahajanpur too there has been a forcible attempt to take possession of the Town Hall. From Kanouj too the Congress Secretary himself telegraphed saying that the volunteer boys had become unruly and were picketing a High School and preventing youngsters under 16 from going to the school. 36,000 volunteers were enlisted in Gorakhpur, not 100 of whom conformed to the Congress pledge. In Calcutta Jamnalalji tells me there is utter disorganization, the volunteers wearing foreign cloth and certainly not pledged to non-violence. With all this news in my possession and much more from the South, the Chauri Chaura never came like a powerful match to ignite the gunpowder and there was a blaze. I assure you that if the thing had not been suspended, we would have been leading not a non-violent struggle but essentially a violent struggle. It is undoubtedly true that non-violence is spreading like the scent of the roses throughout the length and breadth of the land, but the foetid smell of violence is still powerful, and it would be unwise to ignore or underrate it. The cause will prosper by this retreat. The movement had unconsciously drifted from the right path. We have come back to our moorings, and we can again go

straight ahead You are in as disadvantageous a position as I am advantageously placed for judging events in their due proportion

May I give you my own experience of South Africa? We had all kinds of news brought to us in South Africa in our jails. For two or three days during my first experience I was glad enough to receive tit-bits, but I immediately realized the utter futility of interesting myself in this illegal gratification. I could do nothing, I could send no message profitably, and I simply vexed my soul uselessly. I felt that it was impossible for me to guide the movement from the jail I therefore, simply waited till I could meet those who were outside and talk to them freely, and then too I want you to believe me when I tell you that I took only an academic interest because I felt it was not my province to judge anything, and I saw how unerringly right I was I well remember how the thoughts I had up to the time of my discharge from the jail on every occasion were modified immediately after discharge and after getting first-hand information myself. Somehow or other the jail atmosphere does not allow you to have all the bearings in your mind. I would, therefore like you to dismiss the outer world from your view altogether and ignore its existence. I know this is a most difficult task, but if you take up some serious study and some serious manual work you can do it. Above all, whatever you do, don't you be disgusted with the spinning-wheel You and I might have reason to get disgusted with ourselves for having done many things and having believed many things, but we shall never have the slightest cause for regret that we have pinned out faith to the spinning-wheel or that we have spoon so much good yarn per day in the name of the motherland You have *Song Celestial* with you. I cannot give you the inimitable translation of Edwin Arnold, but this is the rendering of the Sanskrit text. "There is no waste of energy, there is no destruction in this. Even a little of this Dharma saves one from many a pitfall." "This dharma" in the original refers to Karma Yoga, and the Karma Yoga of our age is the spinning-wheel. I want adhering letter from you after the freezing dose you have sent me through Pyarelal

Yours sincerely,

M.K. Gandhi

### A DIVINE WARNING<sup>20</sup>

A man is pardoned if he errs once; if he errs a second time, even then a liberal-minded person will pardon him. But what if he errs thrice? What else will he merit except dismissal?

We describe anyone who gets chated once as simple, and an one who gets cheated twice as credulous. If, now, a person allows himself to be cheated thrice, what but a fool should we call him?

Bardoli's civil disobedience has vanished like a dream. God meant to stop it at the very moment when it was a start. There is nothings to wonder at in this. If for one like Rama the hour of coronation turned out to be the hour for going to the forest, why speak of Brdoli? It is only when we have had the experience again and again of things which had once appeared real to us having faded away into dreams, that we shall learn the true meaning of *Swaraj*. At present, only one meaning of *swaraj* seems to me. *Swaraj* is nothing but the sincere effort to win it. The thing itself will seem to move further away from us the more we run after it.

This is true of every ideal. As a person becomes ever more truthful, truth runs farther away from him because he knows that what he mistakenly thought to be truth was not really the truth.

Hence one who follows truth—one who acts rightly—is ever humble; he sees his shortcomings more clearly day by day. *Brahmacharya*<sup>21</sup> is ever running away from a person who tries to observe it, for he discovers that, deep down, desire is still strong in him. He is never satisfied with being to able observe physical continence. *Moksha* also recedes farther away from an aspirant. This fact inspired the profound expression "neti". A number of great *rishis*<sup>22</sup> in ancient times set out to seek *moksha*, to realize the *atman*<sup>23</sup>. In its pursuit, they descended into many valleys and climbed many hills, jumped over thorny hedges and discovered, at the end of the journey, "It cannot be this". Who knows many of them caught a faint glimpse of *moksha*? And yet they were so discerning, so intelligent that, as we know, they were not deceived.

I, therefore, see ever more clearly that for us Swaraj lies in our struggle to win it.

In 1919, Ahmedabad and Viramgam, Amritsar and Kasur showed my error and Satyagraha was suspended. Last November, I witnessed in Bombay man's barbarism and again suspended mass civil disobedience. Even then I did not learn the lesson completely. Now it is in Chauri Chaura which has punished me. Who knows how many more such blows are in store for me. If now people reject my leadership and regard me a fool, they will not be to blame.

If do not know human nature, why do I meddle with such affairs.

I just cannot hold myself back. I also cannot but admit my error when I see it. I would welcome being dismissed. I would be very happy indeed to be counted a fool, but I will certainly not defile my soul by retaining the filth of error in my body.

"If the king gets angry, the city will shelter me; if God is displeased, where shall I turn?" I do not know if Mira actually composed any song with this line, but she certainly lived her life in that spirit. We may bear the world's reproaches, but we should not be guilty in the eyes of God. We should heed His warning.

Had we proceeded with the proposed civil disobedience in Bardoli despite the divine warning from Gorakhpur, we would have certainly regretted the step. The people would have suffered much and our regard for truth and non-violence would have been discredited. We are known as cowards and then we would have been regarded as liars as well. If other parts of India remain peaceful, then only should Bardoli start disobedience—that was what I said, that was the condition. If Bardoli had started civil disobedience despite the violation of that condition then it too would have sinned.

If anyone argues that such peace will **never** be preserved in the country, we may not contradict him. **This is**, however, an argument for giving up the path of Satyagraha and civility. Let the country do anything it likes after **renouncing** the path of civility, our duty is only to see that it does **not** follow untruth while talking of truth and does **not** commit violence while talking of non-violence. Bardoli has observed those conditions.

well enough, and so have I. By acting thus, both have served the people and I personally have proved my fitness as a servant. By admitting errors, the people will rise higher, not fall lower.

Truly, it is God who has saved our fair name. I should have taken a warning from the Madras incidents. I should also have done so from the letters I received from our opponents and non-cooperators. I did not take the warning; but then if a person who enjoys God's kindness does not get warned by a sign, God warns him by beat of drum and, if he does not understand the warning even then. He warns him by thunder and lightning and by a downpour of rain. By doing a duty which requires no great effort, we have escaped big dangers.

If we have had to bend, to retreat, it is in order that we may advance. A person who strays from the path must first return to the point where he left it. After he has returned to it, his progress will be resumed. That is to say, who were slipping down when the Working Committee passed its resolution began to rise again after that.

But this did not satisfy me. I, therefore, felt it necessary to undertake further atonement. My agony had begun the moment telegrams about Gorakhpur were received. But it was necessary that I go through bodily suffering as well. Considering the magnitude of my error, I should not have contented myself merely with a five days' fast. I wished to fast for 14 days. But I let it be five days. If this atonement is insufficient, I shall have to pay the balance sooner or later, along with compound interest. Anyone who repays his full debt in time saves himself from having to pay a greater amount later.

Atonement should not be advertised. But I have publicized mine, and there is a reason. My fast is atonement for me but, for the people of Chauri Chaura, it is a punishment. The punishment inflicted by love is always of this nature. When a lover is hurt, he does not punish the loved one, but suffers himself; he bears the pangs of hunger and hits his own head. He is unconcerned whether or not his loved ones understand his suffering.

But I have also made my fast public by way of warning to others as well. I have no alternative left to me. If a non-cooperator deceived me—and I regard almost the whole of the



country-as a non-cooperator-he may have my body I fondly believe that the country wants me to live. If that is so, by undertaking bodily suffering I suggest to the country that it should not deceive me. If it likes, it may well disown me after rejecting the condition of non-violence. But, so long as it accepts my services, it will have to accept non-violence and truth.

This time I have been content with a fast of five days. If, however, the people refuse to take the warning, five days may become fifteen and fifteen become fifty and I may even lose my life.

I am writing this article on the third day of my fast. I am perfectly clear in my mind that the Hindus, the Muslims, the Parsis, the Christians and the rest will get Swaraj only by following the path of non-violence and it is by following the same path that they will serve the cause of the Khilafat and get justice in regard to the Punjab. It was accepted at the Congress session and in the Khilafat conferences. If, despite this, we give it up, we shall be fighting not for our Dharama, not for God, but for *adharama* and for *Satan*.

We should not follow the bad example of others, not even that of Gazi Mustafa Kamal Pasha. "If a short man runs with a tall one he may not die, but he will certainly fall ill" is a true saying. Even a wise man acts in accordance with his nature, and so does the rest of the world. What then, can one gain by coercion? I speak the truth when I say that India will never come to rule empire through physical strength. It is doing violence to her nature to expect her to win anything through such strength. By her very nature, India is a lover of peace. That is why, whether she knows it or not, she has gone crazy over non-violent non-cooperation based on truth. No one came forward to follow the bad example of the madmen of Ahmedabad and Viramgam. No one, likewise, will imitate the example of the men folk of Chauri Chaura. Such madness is not India's nature, it is only disease. On the other hand, Mustafa Kamal Pasha succeeded with his sword because there is a strength in every nerve of a Turk. The Turks have been fighting for centuries. The people of India have followed the path of peace of thousands of years. We shall not discuss at the moment which people did the better thing. Both violence and non-violence have a place in the world. The *atman* and the body, both succeed. Whether

eventually the *atman* wins or the body. this is not the occasion to consider. If we wish to discuss it, we may do so after we have won Swaraj. Let us, at present, employ the easiest means to gain it. India's nature cannot be changed in a moment. I am convinced that those who wish to free the country with the help of the sword will need ages to succeed in their effort.

If even the Muslims of India try to follow in the footsteps of Mustafa Kamal Pasha, they will taint the fair name of Islam. Islam attaches the utmost importance to peace. The people of India have followed peace and truth for a long-time. Let them win Swaraj this very day by adopting them again; if they discard these, they had better remain slaves. One cannot in the same moment proceed towards both East and West. The path followed by the West is one of violence and atheism; it looks like it for the present at any rate. The path followed by the East, it has long been proved, is one of peace, Dharma and of faith in God. The centre of the West at the present day is England. That of the East has been India since time immemorial. The world thinks that England rules an empire and India is her chief maidservant. Our present effort is to win deliverance from this slavery. If this land of Bharat wishes to end her slavery, she can do so only with the help of her old weapons of non-violence and truth.

There is at the present time not a single country on the face of the earth which is weaker than India in point of physical strength. Even tiny Afghanistan can growl at her.

With whose help does India hope to fight with England? Japan's? If it fights with the help of Kabul, or of some other country, it will have to accept the slavery of that country. Hence, if the country wishes to be free in this generation, it can count on no help other than God's and God protects only those who follow truth and non-violence. Thus, the divine warning from Gorakhpur wants us to understand this if we wish to see our dreams come true. We must cultivate the spirit of non-violence.

### NEHRU ON NON-VIOLENCE<sup>24</sup>

I do not know why I have been released. My father, who is suffering from asthma, and many hundreds of my comrades

are still in jail. I have only this to say—keep on fighting. keep on working for independent India and do not rest. Do not forsake your ideals. Do not go in for false compromises. Continue to follow our great leader Mahatma Gandhi and remain loyal to the Congress. Be active, be organised and remember above all, the *Charkha* and *Ahimsa*

### **INSTRUCTIONS TO WORKERS OF U.P. CONGRESS COMMITTEE<sup>25</sup>**

1. The attention of all workers is drawn to the following instructions issued by Mahatam Gandhi:

- (i) The cornerstone of non-cooperation being non-violence, workers are expected to refrain from violence alike in word and deed
- (ii) Workers should not countenance violence in word or deed among those with whom they come in contact.
- (iii) Propaganda consists not in pointing out the defects of British rule but in pointing out the means of remedying those defects.
- (iv) Emphasis should, therefore be placed more upon what the people should do than on why they should do it.
- (v) Social boycott in the shape of stopping the service of barbers, dhobis, medical help, conveyances should be discouraged.
- (vi) Big meeting should be avoided.
- (vii) People should be advised to observe perfect silence at meetings and to refrain from pressing towards the centre.
- (viii) Workers should rely more upon personal canvassing than upon speeches.
- (ix) Personal canvassing should consist merely in placing the argument in favour of particular items of non-cooperation.
- (x) Cooperators should be approached in a friendly spirit.
- (xi) All police orders should be scrupulously obeyed. It should be remembered that civil disobedience remains suspended.

(xii) People should be told clearly that suspension of payment of taxes or resignation on a national scale of Government service whether military or civil has not yet been commenced and should not be resorted to.

(xiii) In the event of disputes between zemindars and ryots. They should be settled by friendly discussion or intervention. Pending establishment of Swaraj we must bear out our disabilities as far as possible.

2 The strengthening of the Indian National Congress organization is the most important work before us. Workers should, therefore, study carefully the new constitution and the new rules framed by the Provincial Committee and concentrate on enrolling members of Congress Committees.

3. Village Congress circles should elect an executive committee or *Panchayat*. That *Panchayat* should be responsible for:

(a) Settlement of disputes in the village.

(b) Primary education of every child—male or female.

(c) Introduction of spinning wheels in every home

(d) Hygiene and sanitation of the village.

(e) Promotion of Hindu Muslim unity.

(f) The raising of the suppressed classes and the infusion of democratic and brotherly ideas amongst the people.

(g) Carrying out of all other items of non-cooperation resolution and other resolutions of the Congress so far as they apply to the village.

4. Every village *panchayat* shall as far as possible consist of representatives of each important caste in the village.

5. Volunteers or workers from outside should not accept the office of President, Secretary to Treasures, in any village or *tahsil* Congress Committees. They should act as advisers and give all possible help to the local leaders or *panches*.

6. Congress Committees or circles should work in harmony with the branches of the Kisan Sabha. In many villages a *panchayat* has already been established by the Kisan Sabha, and the same *Panchayat* will probably serve as the Congress executive for the village.

7. Workers should always consult the *panches* and other leaders of the various castes in the village before starting work there.

8. Workers must remember that the collection of money for the Tilak Memorial Swaraj Fund is an essential part of our work. They must, therefore make every efforts to raise funds but the greatest care must be taken about these monies. Complaints are frequently made of the mishandling of public funds and many unscrupulous are deluding the villagers and making collections in the name of Congress. It is, therefore necessary that only those persons who are thoroughly reliable and known should personally collect money. As a rule donations should be sent direct to the secretary or treasurer of the Provincial or District Committee—small as may be deposited with the treasurer or mahajan of the village *panchayat*. Volunteers should as far as possible not handle funds. Receipts should be issued for all sums received and proper accounts kept.

9. Workers should refrain as far as possible from making regular speeches. There is too great a tendency for specifying. We must talk less and do more.

10. Workers should send frequent (at least once a week) reports of the work done to their respective committees.

11. Above all each volunteer and worker must remember that he can do more for the cause by this personal example and behaviour than by any number of brave speeches and processions. He must be utterly non-violent in word and deed. He must be disciplined and brave, he must wear pure Swadeshi *khaddar* or *garha*, he must discard luxuries and all evil habits. He must learn humility and toleration. He must not excite people by frenzied oratory or unreserved denunciation of opponents; rather must he inspire hope and confidence by his own faith and strength. And if, in the performance of his duty, he has to suffer or go to jail he should meet his fate smilingly—not afraid and yet not melodramatically posing as a martyr.

7. (a) In towns also workers should approach the heads of each caste or class of people and through them the rank and file.

## References

1. *From Records of the Intelligence Branch of the I.G.P. West Bengal* (Speech in Dacca on 15 December 1920).
2. Victory.
3. I bow to the Mother.
4. Mother India.
5. Song.
6. In his book *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India*.
7. Of 1910.
8. The scheme of Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms.
9. To enquire into the Punjab disorders of April 1919.
10. Report of Congress on the Punjab disorders published on 25 March, 1920.
11. Used for Michael O'Dwyer, the Lt. Governor of Punjab.
12. Rule of Ravana.
13. *Young India*. 16 February 1922.
14. Police Station.
15. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 19 February 1922.
16. *A Bunch of Old Letters*, pp. 23-5.
17. Of 11-12 February 1922.
18. Used for Pandit Motilal Nehru.
19. Of 1 February 1922.
20. *Navajivan*, 19 February 1922.
21. Celebacy.
22. Saint.
23. Spirit.
24. *Aaj*. 10 March 1922 Original in Hindi. Jawaharlal was released on technical grounds, after serving only 87 days, which was less than half his sentence.
25. Hand-written note by Jawaharlal Nehru is available in the Municipal Museum, Allahabad.

## CHAPTER : 7

# Tragedy at Chauri Chaura

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On 5 February 1922, in a violent outbreak at Chauri Chaura, about fifteen miles from Gorakhpur, in U.P. twenty-two police men were burnt to death by a mob of a few hundred volunteers who attacked the police station as a measure of retaliation to the alleged beating of some Congress *satyagrahis* by a local police officer. The mob set fire to the building of the police station. Some of them perished and those who were driven out by the heat and smoke were thrown back into the fire after being besmirched with kerosene.

*The Leader* reported, 'After Bombay, Gorkhpur. An orgy of blood and arson. Policemen butchered and burnt. Organized attack on Police Station. Thana destroyed by volunteers and villagers.'<sup>1</sup>

The incident of Chauri Chaura figured in the Legislative Assembly of India and William Vincent stated, 'Hostile feeling was said to be strong in the towns. Chauri Chaura and Bereilly are the only two places of which we have information... All possible precaution are being taken and we have asked Local Government to enlist further bodies of armed police for the purpose of coping with the person disorders where the existing force is inadequate to deal with it.'<sup>2</sup> The echo of the tragedy at Chauri Chaura was also heard in the House of Commons on 14 March 1922 when one of its members, Colonel C. Yate explained that '... 22 policemen were murdered, soaked with oil, and burnt, by a mob led by Gandhi volunteers...'<sup>3</sup>

'Dawn of Reason. Mass Civil Disobedience Suspended Congress Working Committee's Decision. Courting of Arrest and Defiance of Authority Prohibited.'<sup>4</sup>

It is indeed a significant point to note about the expense of £ 120 involved in a telegram which the Viceroy sent to the Secretary of State on 9 February 1922 giving him details about

the Non-Cooperation Movement soon after its suspension after the Bardoli resolution.<sup>6</sup>

The president, District Congress Committee reported thus: "The scene presented a most horrible and gruesome appearance. Two buildings were still burning.... Some boxes and trunks belonging evidently to the members of the police force were found lying open without their contents. Twenty-two corpses, more or less burnt and is figured, were lying there, seven having been almost completely burnt.... Besides these burnt corpses, there were two corpses, apparently of men of the mob which were not burnt, one of them clothed in *khaddar* which had a gunshot.... It is said that all the police force stationed there, including the armed guard which has been sent a day before, as some trouble was apprehended, has been murdered except two who were out on duty elsewhere, and one constable who managed to escape.

This incident and a few other happenings elsewhere made Gandhi to announce his final decision in connection with the suspension of the first Non-Cooperation Movement which was hardly one-and a half year old. Though the Movement was finally withdrawn, Gandhi's argument and plea for suspension were found unconvincing and were severely criticised by the prominent Congress leaders.

The local bazaar, called Mandera bazaar, had been for sometime past the scene of vigorous picketing which was so far successful that foreign cloth was excluded and the drink shops had no customer. This was resented and resisted by the local zamindar, the owner of the bazaar. On February 1st, B. Gupteswar Singh, reputed to be a very zealous police officer for which he was in bad odour in that district, with a police force visited the bazaar, and was alleged to have beaten some of the volunteers engaged in peaceful picketing. Amongst the picketers there, he recognised one government pensioner, whom he threatened with a warning that his pension would cease if he continued picketing like that. These events led all the volunteers of the surrounding villages to assemble at Dumri, a neighbouring village; on Saturday the 4th February. They were believed to have numbered five or six hundred and accompanied by a very large crowd marched to the *thana* with



evident intention of mischief. The procession halted in front of the *thana*. The volunteers, it is said, demanded to know why the Sub-Inspector beat them on the previous bazaar day, expressed their determination to picket the bazaar that day, and asked the police to prevent them from doing so if they dared. Some neutrals acted as peace makers and managed to pacify the volunteers who then moved on. When the major part of the mob had moved on to some distance, a hue and cry was raised in the rear. It appeared that the police roughly handled some of the stragglers in the rear. Upon this the mob returned and began to throw brick-bats.

The armed police at first fired a volley of shots in the air but finding that it produced no effect, they fired on the mob. How long the firing lasted is not known, but the dead bodies of only two rioters were found near the *thana*. More might have been taken away by the mob. In spite of the firing the police were overpowered by the mob.

The policemen then seeing no loophole of escape made for their rooms and bolted the doors from inside. The mob then set fire to the building. Some of the policemen perished in the flames and those who were driven out by the heat and smoke were brutally assaulted, besmirched in kerosine, and thrown back into the fire there to suffer further torture until life was extinct. The brutality of the outrage and its unprovoked character combined to deal a staggering blow to Gandhi, and at first he refused to believe all that appeared in the newspapers. Gradually as details came from prominent leaders the truth unveiled was more horrible than the scaring head-lines in Anglo-Indian journals.<sup>6</sup>

On this tragedy Lord Reading commented thus, 'The recent events in the United Provinces and particularly the murder of the 21 persons at the police station has frightened many of those who would wish to sit on the fence, for they begin to realise what the consequences will be of Gandhi's campaign... He [Butler] told me that the effect upon many of his people of the recent crimes has been undoubtedly to steady them in favour of Government. But they do not yet seem to understand that when once the forces of disorder become liberated, you cannot be too squeamish in putting them down.'<sup>7</sup>

In its final judgement, the Allahabad High Court stated after a year and three months of trial<sup>8</sup> '....the mob was not a disorganised one but had actually come out on a set purpose and had actually committed acts of violence which had resulted in the butchery of 23 policemen and chowkidars... The appellants are in the main ignorant peasants, the great majority of them were drawn into the business by misrepresentation of facts and preposterous promises concerning the millennium of Swaraj the arrival of which was to be forwarded by courage and resolution on their part. Some indeed were apparently influenced by the belief that Mr. Gandhi was a worker of miracles. Thirty-eight men were acquitted, three were sentenced to rigorous imprisonment; nineteen were sentenced to death; one hundred ten were transported for life.<sup>9</sup>

The *Times of India* commented: The rejection by the Viceroy of the petitions for mercy of the 19 prisoners sentenced for complicity in the Chauri Chaura outrage was right and inevitable. These men were condemned as involved in one of the most ghastly crimes that has recently been committed in India, and to let them off would have been a perverse act of sentimental injustice.

Beside the tragedy at Chauri Chaura in February 1922, the previous year had witnessed strikes, disturbances and riots at some places where the leaders succeeded in arousing a feeling of hostility, anger and dissatisfaction of the people against the *Raj*. The areas thus effected by the Non-Cooperation-Khilafat propaganda was mostly urban and as many as forty disturbances broke out. But the important places where the riots occurred were Bombay, Malabar, Aligarh, Malegaon and Giridih. The open disregard of the government enkindled in the hearts of the people became uncontrollable once the fire of agitation had taken the ugly shape of riots leading to loss of numerous lives.

It is a significant point to note that a few days prior to the suspension of the Non-Cooperation Movement, Gandhi addressed a lengthy letter to the Viceroy from Bardoli in which he made some pertinent points for him to agree and, in case of disagreement, threatened to embark on a mass civil disobedience under the leadership of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.<sup>10</sup> Whereas,

he complained about repression of a virulent type with the concurrence of the Government of India in Bengal, Assam, the United Provinces, Orissa and elsewhere, he also mentioned about the looting of property, assaults on innocent people, the brutal treatment of prisoners in the jails including flogging which were neither legal nor civilized or in any way necessary. In the circumstances, there is nothing before the country but to adopt some non-violent method for the enforcement of its demands including the elementary rights of free speech, free association and free press..... But before the people of Bardoli actually commence mass civil disobedience, I would respectfully urge you as the head of the Government of India, finally to revise your policy and set free all the non-cooperation prisoners who are convicted or under trial for non-violent activities and to declare in clear terms a policy of absolute non-interference with all non-violent activities in the country whether they be regarding the redress of the Khilafat or the Punjab wrongs or *swaraj* or any other purpose. ....If you can see your way to make the necessary declaration within seven days of the date of publication of this manifesto, I shall be prepared to advise postponement of civil disobedience of an aggressive character, till the imprisoned workers have, after their discharge, reviewed the whole situation and considered the position *de nonvo*....

This letter was an ultimatum to the Viceroy, a kind of procedure which had no precedent in the annals of India's struggle for freedom. It was indeed a bold step which a leader like Gandhi must have weighed carefully with all its pros and cons. The grave estimate of the actual forces of the situation three days before the Bardoli decision was depicted in a telegram of the Viceroy to Secretary of State. The lower classes in the towns have been seriously affected by the non-cooperation movement.... In certain areas the peasantry have been affected, particularly in parts of the Assam Valley, United Province, Bihar and Orissa and Bengal. As regards the Punjab, the Akali agitation.... Has penetrated to the rural Sikhs. A large proportion of the Mohammedan population throughout the country are embittered and sullen ....The Government of India are prepared for disorder of a more formidable nature than has in the past occurred, and do not seek to minimise in any way the fact that great anxiety is caused by the situation.<sup>11</sup>

The whole programme, however, collapsed in a few days with the tragic incident at Chauri Chaura. At a hasty meeting of the Congress Working Committee at Bardoli on 12 February, the final decision was reached, in view of the inhuman conduct of the mob at Charuri Chaura to end, not only mass civil disobedience but the whole campaign of civil disobedience through volunteer processions, the holding of public meetings under ban and the like and to substitute a consecutive programme of spinning, temperance reform and educational activities. Then a constructive programme was drawn up which included the enlisting of a crore of members, the popularising of the *charkha*, organizing of national institutions, panchayats, etc. The battle was over. The whole campaign was over.... The mountain had indeed borne a mouse.<sup>12</sup>

The entire movement, which according to R. Palm Dutt, had been organised on the basis of complete discouragement of any mass activity and mechanical subordination to the will of one man, was inevitably thrown into helpless confusion and demoralisation by the Bardoli decision.<sup>13</sup> In support of his argument, he quotes the statement of Jawaharlal Nehru who endeavoured to defend the decision, but admits that the manner of the decision, .... brought about a certain demoralisation. It is possible that this sudden bolting up of a great movement contributed to a tragic development in the country. The drift to sporadic and futile violence in the political struggle was stopped, but the suppressed violence had to find a way out, and in the following years this perhaps aggravated the communal trouble.<sup>14</sup>

At this point of time, prominent Congress leaders like Motilal Nehru, Lala Lajpat Rai, Rajendra Prasad, Jawaharlal Nehru and others who were still in jail were greatly disappointed and a wave of despondency swept the country. Motilal Nehru levelled severe criticism against this decision and questioned as to why a town at the foot of the Himalayas be penalised, if a village at Cape Comrin failed to observe non-violence. Isolate Chauri Chaura; if need be, Gorakhpur, but go on with Civil Disobedience, individual and mass.<sup>15</sup> Lala Lajpat Rai, concluded his 75 page letter with an element of bitterness in its contents. The fact is that no single man, however able, high-minded, wise and sagacious can lead a movement of this nature without making mistakes. Mahatma's overconfidence in his judgement

and his impulsiveness has often landed us, his humble colleagues, in very false positions but now we are simply routed, and the only thing for us to do is to be happy in our prison cells in the consciousness that at least we have not contributed to the collapse of the movement.<sup>16</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru's reaction was quite obvious. He, in fact, wondered why a national movement which had been launched about one-and-a-half year ago with the idea of achieving certain ends in view, should have been suspended in a dramatic way, and immense sufferance, sacrifices and the patriotic fervour shown by thousands of non-violent Congress *satyagrahis* should have been ignored because a few *satyagrahis* under a fit of unwelcome sentimental violence had gone wild in a small town, Chauri Chaura. The younger people were naturally even more agitated. Our mounting hopes tumbled to the ground, and this mental reaction was to be expected.... Chauri Chaura may have been and was a deplorable occurrence and wholly opposed to the spirit of the non-violent movement but were a remote village and a mob of excited peasants in an out-of-the-way place going to put an end, for sometime at least to our national struggle for freedom? If this was the inevitable consequence of a sporadic act of violence, then surely there was something lacking in the philosophy and technique of a non-violent struggle.... Must we train the three hundred and odd millions of Indians in the theory and practice of non-violent action before we could go forward?.... But even if we succeeded, what of the numerous agents provocateurs, stool pigeons and the like who crept into our movement and indulged in violence themselves or induced others to do so? If this was the sole condition of its function, then the non-violent method of resistance would always fail.<sup>17</sup>

But at this stage, it looks obvious that Nehru's faith in Gandhi's wisdom was such that he was prepared to trust his judgement despite grave reservations. After all he was the author and originator of it, and who could be a better judge of what it was and what it was not? And without him where was our movement?<sup>18</sup>

Subhas Chandra Bose opined, 'No one could understand why Mahatma should have used the isolated incident at Chauri Chaura for strangling the movement all over the country, Popular resentment was all the greater because the Mahatma

had not cared to consult representatives from the different provinces and because the situation in the country as a whole was exceedingly favourable for the success of the civil disobedience campaign. To sound the order of retreat just when public enthusiasm was reaching the boiling-point was nothing short of a national calamity.... I was with Deshabandhu at the time and I could see that he was beside himself with anger and sorrow at the way Mahatma Gandhi was repeatedly bungling.... Lala Lajpat Rai was experiencing the same feelings and it is reported that in sheer disgust he addressed a seventeenth letter to the Mahatma from prison.<sup>19</sup>

When a prominent member of the Legislative Assembly, Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy asked William Vincent about his reaction on the resolutions passed by the Working Committee of the Congress at Bardoli, he replied, '20 'The Government have seen and considered the resolutions referred to. They can discover in them no indication of any fundamental change in the attitude and policy of the non-cooperation party. Whilst civil disobedience is to be postponed for the present, there is no suggestion that it should be definitely abandoned as item in their programme. On the contrary, the clear intention of the resolutions is that this step should be merely suspended till the ground has been adequately prepared for its inauguration on a large scale.... The resolutions thus point merely to a temporary change in the tactics of the party, and not to any reversal of radical alteration of its aims, which are directed, as before, to the subversion and paralysis of the lawfully constituted Government of the country. The Government of India desire to make it clear that, unless and until there is a complete cessation of the illegal activities of the non-co-operation movement, there will be no change in their own attitude towards it. I am to add that these activities have already produced a serious situation which many at any moment eventuate in bloodshed and disorder.

But the storm blew with unexplained fury at a meeting of the A.I.C.C., where every line of the Bardoli resolutions was subjected to a scathing attack. Gandhi was assailed on all sides and was taken to task for resiling from the movement and for the Bardoli resolution in general. Bengal and Maharashtra were very critical to him and 'tore him to pieces'. Why should civil resisters wear khadi? Why should individual Civil

Disobedience not be continued? In reply Gandhi had put one word to say that those who went to jail were civilly dead and could not claim or be expected to advise those outside. A vote of censure on Gandhi was moved by B.S. Moonje at the meeting of the A.I.C.C. Some speakers supported it by their speeches, but when it was put to vote, it was defeated and thus the 'storm blew over and Gandhi like the proverbial reed remained unmoved' <sup>21</sup>

The Working Committee of Congress which met at Bardoli on the 11th and 12th February 1922 passed the following resolutions:

(1) The Working Committee deplores the inhuman conduct of the mob at Chauri Charua in having brutally murdered constables and wantonly burned police thana, and tenders its sympathy to the families of the bereaved.

(2) In spite of the nation's repeated warnings, every time mass civil disobedience has been imminent, some popular violent outburst has taken place, indicating that the atmosphere in the country is not non-violent enough for mass civil disobedience, the latest instance being the tragic and terrible events at Chauri Chaura near Gorakhpur. The Working Committee of the Congress, therefore, resolves that mass civil disobedience as contemplated at Bardoli and elsewhere, be suspended and instructs the local Congress Committees forthwith to advise the cultivators to pay, the land revenue and other taxes due to the Government, the payment of which might have been suspended in anticipation of mass civil disobedience, and instructs them to suspend every other preparatory activity of an offensive nature.

(3) The suspension of mass civil disobedience shall be continued till the atmosphere is non-violent as to ensure the non-repetition of popular atrocities, such as to Gorakhpur, of hooliganism, such as to Bombay and Madras respectively on November 17th 1921, and January 13th last.

(4) In order to promote a peaceful atmosphere, the Working Committee advise, till further instructions, all Congress organisations to stop activities especially designed to court arrest and imprisonment, save the normal Congress activities including voluntary Hartals, wherever an absolutely peaceful

atmosphere can be assured, and for that end all picketing shall be stopped, save for the bona fide and peaceful purpose of warning the visitors to liquor-shops against the evils of drinking. Such picketing is to be controlled by persons of known good character and especially selected by the Congress Committee concerned.

(5) The Working Committee advise, till further instructions the stoppage of all volunteer processions and public meetings merely for the purpose of defiance of the notifications regarding such meetings. This, however, shall not interfere with the private meeting of the Congress and other Committees or public meetings which are required for the conduct of the normal activities of the Congress.

(6) Complaints having been brought to the notice of the Working Committee that ryots are not paying rents to the zamindars, the Working Committee advises Congress workers and organisations to inform the ryots that such withholding of rent is contrary to the resolutions of the Congress, and that it is injurious to the best interests of the country

(7) The Working Committee assures the zamindars that Congress movement is in no way intended to attack their legal rights, and that even when the ryots have grievances, the Committee desire that redress should be sought by mutual consultation and by the usual recourse to arbitration.

(8) Complaints having been brought to the notice of Working Committee that in the formation of volunteer corps great laxity prevails in the selection, and that insistence is not laid on the full use of hand-spun and hand-woven *khaddar*, and on the full observance by the Hindus of the rule as to the removal of untouchability, nor is care being taken to ascertain that the candidates believe fully in the observance of non-violence in word and deed in terms of the Congress Resolution, the Working Committee calls upon all-Congress organisations to revise their lists and remove from them names of all such volunteers as do not strictly conform to the requirements of the pledge.

(9) The Working Committee is of opinion that unless Congressmen carry out to the full the Congress Constitution and the resolutions from time-to-time issued by the Working



Committee it is not possible to achieve its objects expeditiously or at all.

(10) The foregoing resolutions will have effect only pending the meeting, to be specially convened, of the All India Congress Committee and thereafter subject to confirmation by it. The Secretary will call such a meeting as soon as possible after consultation with Hakim Ajmal Khan.

### **Work of Congress Organisation**

Where the Gorakhpur tragedy is a powerful proof of the fact that the mass mind has not yet fully realised the necessity of non-violence as the integral, active and chief part of Mass Civil Disobedience, and whereas the reported indiscriminate acceptance of persons as volunteers in contravention of the Congress instructions betrays want of appreciation of the vital part of *Satyagraha*, and whereas in the opinion of the Working Committee the delay in the attainment of the national aim is solely due to the weak and incomplete execution in practice of the constitution of the Congress with a view to perfecting the internal organisation, the Working Committee advises all Congress organisations to be engaged in the following activities:—

- (1) To enlist at least one crore of members of the Congress.

NOTE:—(i) Since peace (non-violence and legitimacy) and truth are the essence of the Congress creed, no person should be enlisted who does not believe in non-violence and truth as indispensable for the attainment of *Swaraj*. The creed of the Congress must, therefore, be carefully explained to each person who is appealed to join the Congress.

(ii) The workers should note that none who does not pay the annual subscription can be regarded as qualified Congressman. All the old members are, therefore, to be advised to re-register their names.

(2) To popularise the spinning-wheel and organise the manufacture of handspun and hand-woven *khaddar*.

No picketing of the Government Schools should be resorted to. Best reliance should be placed upon the superiority of National Schools in all vital matters to command attendance.

**NOTE**—To this end, all workers and office-bearers should be dressed in *khaddar*, and it is recommended that with a view to encouraging others they should themselves learn handspinning.

(3) To organise National Schools.

**NOTE**—No picketing of the Government Schools should be resorted to. Best reliance should be placed upon the superiority of National Schools in all vital matters to command attendance.

(4) To organise the depressed classes for a better life, to improve their social, mental and moral condition, to induce them to send their children to the National Schools and to provide for them the ordinary facilities which other citizens enjoy.

**NOTE**—Whilst, therefore, where the prejudice against the untouchable is still strong in places, separate schools and separate wells must be maintained out of Congress funds, every effort should be made to draw such children to National Schools and to persuade the people to allow the untouchable to use the common wells.

(5) To organise the temperance campaign amongst the people addicted to the drink habit by house-to-house visits and to rely more upon appeal to the drinker in his home than upon picketing.

(6) To organise village and town "Panchayats" for the private settlement of all disputes, reliance being placed solely upon the force of public opinion, and the truthfulness of "Panchayat" decision to ensure obedience to them.

**NOTE**—In order to avoid even the appearance of coercion, no social boycott should be resorted to against those who will not obey the Panchayat's decisions.

(7) In order to promote and emphasise unity among all classes and races and mutual good will the establishment of which is the aim of the movement of non-co-operation, to organise a School Service Department that will render help to all, irrespective of differences, in times of illness or accident.

**NOTE**—A non-co-operator whilst firmly adhering to his creed, will deem it a privilege to render personal service in

case of illness or accident to every person, whether English or Indian.

(8) To continue the Tilak Memorial Swaraj Fund and to call upon every Congressman or Congress sympathiser to save at least one hundredth part of his annual income for the year 1921. Every province to send every month 25 per cent of its income from the Tilak Memorial Swaraj Fund to the All India Congress Committee.

(9) The above resolutions shall be brought before the forthcoming Session of the All India Congress Committee for revision, if necessary.

(10) In the opinion of the Working Committee, a project is necessary for the purpose of finding employment for those who may give up Government service, and to that end the Committee appoints Masers Main Mahomed Haji Mahomed Chotani, Jamnalal Bajaj and V.J. Patel to draw up a scheme for consideration by the said Special Meeting of the All India Congress Committee..

Hakim Ajmal Khan had his reaction on the Bardoli decision. He pointed out that the Bardoli resolution did not mean the abandonment of the movement in any respect but was only meant to retrace steps in order to equip the masses properly for a renewed and more vigorous offensive when they were completely saturated with the spirit of non-violence and had made great strides on the constructive side of their campaign.<sup>22</sup>

Already there was distinctly visible split in the Congress camp—though for the time being it was kept hidden under a camouflage of words. Swami Shraddhanand who wanted to drop non-cooperation altogether did not attend the Delhi meeting. Malaviya who tried his best to keep to the spirit of the Bardoli resolution was not heeded. The Aligarh students passed a flamboyant resolution condemning the suspension of civil disobedience. Other instances of revolt from Gandhi's leadership cropped up. And government now saw its chance. There was about this time in India, especially in the United Provinces, a strong under current of lawlessness. There was a very wide-spread strike over the East Indian Railway—and daily it was threatening to break out into the lawlessness. The Aika movement ostensibly to preserve the rights of the villagers

against the oppressions of the Zamindars, started in the U.P. was the cause of a panic. The Bhils in Rajputana were in militant unrest. In Assam a tragedy happened in Kanarigh where a mob repeated the mistakes of Amritsar in 1919, and instead of quietly sitting down to a fusillade of fire attacked the police and paid the usual penalty. Clearly, Gandhi was unable to stem the tide of unrest. His great name failed to bring quiet and non-violence. The upper classes were in terror. On all sides in European quarters the cry was raised: "Arrest the Man." In England this was very insistent. On February 23rd William Vincent said in the Legislative Assembly that Government had not changed its attitude towards the Congress, even after the Bardoli resolution. On February 28, Robert Watson-Smyth talked of hitting back: "hit back hard", he said in the Bengal Chamber. On February 14, there was the great debate in Parliament when the M.P.s wanted the application of more force and repression in India. Montagu was the subject of intense vituperation. A vote of censure on him was moved. Churchill was almost openly against his cabinet colleague, the Secretary of State for India. Even the Prime Minister gave warning to those who wanted further change in India. Matters now took a dramatic turn.

So long as the riotous multitude frenzied into unrest and the accumulated tortures of years was hushed into non-violence by the magic name of Gandhi, Government lay quiet; but soon as the repentant Mahatma was left in the lurch by the quarrelsome mob of second-rate non-cooperators, utterly incapable of understanding the elementary principle of self control—and, it must be remembered that by this time all the best and the truest of Gandhi's followers were in jail—Government saw its chance and pounced upon him. The Government would not now do otherwise than take charge of Gandhi as there was fierce internal dissensions in the N.C.O. camp. As says Professor Rushbrook Williams, the publicity officer of the Government of India—

"This step had long been contemplated, but had been postponed from time to time for various reasons. In the first place there was a natural reluctance to incarcerate, a man who, however mistaken might be his activities, was by all widely respected and by millions revered as a saint. Moreover.

he had consistently preached the gospel of non-violence, and done all that he could to restrain the more impatient of his followers from embarking upon forcible methods. It was further impossible to ignore the fact that until a substantial body of Indian opinion was prepared to support measures against Mr. Gandhi's person: and until the popular belief in his divine inspiration had been weakened by the influx of time, there was erosion to fear that his arrest would have been attended with bloody outbreaks in numerous places, by the intensification of racial bitterness, and by the creation of conditions in which the new constitution would have little or no chance of success. That the arrest, being well-timed, passed off peacefully, should not mislead the reader into thinking that it could have been effected with equal absence of popular excitement at an earlier period. It came when Mr. Gandhi's political reputation, for reasons already outlined, was at its nadir; when the enthusiasm of his followers had reached the lowest ebb; when the public mind of India was engrossed with other issues.'

To enable the representatives of the people to consider and discuss the Bardoli resolution on suspension of civil disobedience a meeting of the All India Congress Committee was arranged to be held at Delhi on the 24th February 1922. A meeting of the Central Khilafat Committee was also arranged at the same place.

Accordingly a large number of the members of the All India Congress Committee met at Hakim Ajmal Khan's house in Delhi on February 24th. The meeting was private, as, owing to the application of the Seditious Meetings Act in Delhi since November 1921, no public meeting could be held. Since the morning the members of the Working Committee held informal conferences with various Congress leaders who had arrived from the provinces so as to enable it to come to a satisfactory decision as to the terms of the resolutions to be placed before the All India Committee which had been called to pass its judgment on the decision of its executive. Although Gandhi's opinion still carried great weight among his followers, the extreme element was in revolt against him. The crux of the issues before the Committee was Civil Disobedience, both defensive and aggressive. There was even a small party for the total abandonment of non-co-operation. The real conflict lay

between the immediate followers of Gandhi and the leaders from Bengal, the Punjab and Maharashtra. The latter strongly condemned the suspension and urged immediate resumption of defensive Civil Disobedience and resort to Mass Civil Disobedience in the near future as originally contemplated.

The All India Congress Committee met next day the 25th February, and had a long sitting. The main resolution was moved by Gandhi and seconded by V.J. Patel. The resolution, while confirming the Bardoli decision suspending certain Congress activities, again sanctioned practically all the important activities with the exception of Mass Civil Disobedience as contemplated at Bardoli. A large number of amendments to the motion was made, the majority of which tended to go a step further than ever contemplated in the main resolution which Gandhi moved on behalf of the Congress Working Committee. The text of the resolution as finally passed is given below—

### **The Delhi Resolution**

The All India Congress Committee, having carefully considered the resolutions passed by the Working Committee at its meeting held at Bardoli on the 11th and 12th inst., confirms the said resolutions, and further resolves that individual Civil Disobedience, whether of a defensive or aggressive character, may be commenced in respect of particular places or particular laws at the instance of, and upon permission being granted, therefore, by the respective Provincial Committees, provided that such Civil Disobedience shall not be permitted unless all the conditions laid down by the Congress or the All India Congress Committee or the Working Committee are strictly fulfilled.

Reports having been received from various quarters that picketing regarding foreign cloth is as necessary as liquor-picketing, the All India Congress Committee authorises such picketing of a *bona fide* character on the same terms as liquor-picketing mentioned unite Bardoli resolutions.

The All India Congress Committee wishes it to be understood that the resolutions of the Working Committee do not mean any abandonment of the original Congress programme

of non-co-operation or permanent abandonment of Mass Civil Disobedience, but considers that an atmosphere of necessary mass non-violence can be established by the workers concentrating upon the constructive programme framed by the Working Committee at Bardoli.

The All India Congress Committee is of opinion that the Congress has attained considerable success in every item of Non-cooperation, and that spirit of Non-co-operation which pervades the atmosphere has strengthened the country, and full Non-cooperation alone will lead ultimately to real friendship and equality.

The All India Congress Committee hold Civil Disobedience to be the right and duty of the people to be exercised and performed, whenever the State opposes the declared will of the people.<sup>23</sup>

In the process of the Non-Cooperation Movement and with its growing tempo in 1921-22, it is significant to note that adherence to the cult of absolute non-violence was not always visible. At times, the volcano of violence, in a big or small way, was simmering underneath the principles initially undertaken and promise made for their sincere implementation. The agrarian risings in Awadh for the redress of grievances of the peasantry, riots in Malabar and Malegaon and violence shown on the eve of the Princes visit to Bombay and Madras, were the events which had marred the sanctity of the non-violent character of the movement.

Gandhi's action enabled the government to 'relax and made Jawaharlal Nehru's task in sustaining the morale of Congress men so much the harder.'<sup>24</sup> The main reason for his disappointment was that the campaign had been mustering strength in his own province. Even the government seemed much worried over the 'wide spread tension and preparations for intensification of civil disobedience.'<sup>25</sup> The government sources stated, 'The situation is rapidly deteriorating and getting more out of control. His Excellency-in-Council has no doubt that deterioration will spread and alarming developments, unless action is taken to stop the agitation at its source.'<sup>26</sup> It had been a glaring phenomenon to see the Congress volunteers in uniform attempting to replace the police, while Congressmen

in some districts had set up their own educational institutions....' The Commissioner of Allahabad Division also reported about the establishment of police stations in various areas.<sup>27</sup>

Gandhi's whole life was full of experiments which demonstrated how truth and love enabled one to solve even the complex problems of life. His *Autobiography* and numerous other writings during the span of his long life are replete with experiences of a nature which were instrumental in moulding his character and influencing his philosophy.

According to Gandhi, success in a *satyagraha* was not possible unless *satyagrahis* have the sincere backing of and firm control over the masses so that the latter would eschew all violence. The only way to acquire this kind of control was to win the heart of the masses and to establish a living contact with them. This was impossible unless *satyagrahis* 'work for them, through them and in their midst, not as their patrons but as their servants.'<sup>28</sup> The aim of discipline was to develop in the *satyagrahi* soldier, non-violence, soul-force or moral force i.e. to help him to realize in a concrete way, his moral and spiritual unity with all human beings. The discipline required the will not to kill even in retaliation, and the courage to face death without revenge, and the best means to develop discipline in the rank and file of the *satyagrahi* forces was organized constructive work.

The aim of individual was well as group *stayagraha* is not to crouch, defeat or punish the tyrant or breaks his will. The *satyagrahi* should love the opponent as a human being and aim at rousing him to a sense of equity by an appeal to the best in him i.e. at converting him. As Gandhi once remarked to Miss Agatha Harrison, The essence of non-violent technique is that it seeks to liquidate antagonism but not the antagonist.<sup>29</sup>

At the time of the inauguration of the movement and during September 1920 and March 1922, Gandhi preached the gospel of goodwill, non-violent action and peaceful picketing and raised the slogan of 'no-hatred' against single Briton. His advice and preaching to the Congress volunteers was against the feelings of ill-will and hatred against the Englishmen. It is quite evident that throughout this period Gandhi's ardent objective was to see that the British government had the



feeling to the fact that Indian demand for *swaraj* and constitutional rights did deserve consideration at a higher level and to ignore it or postpone it to an indefinite period would be denial of justice to the millions of people who by this time were well-awakened to the future line of action to be adopted by them.

The Congress *satyagrahis*, of course, did not, at all places, adhere to the basic tenants of the Non-Cooperation Movement as advised, preached and enunciated by Gandhi. At such places, where violent action was shown, the leadership failed to educate the masses regarding the true principles of *satyagrahis* enunciated by him. However, at numerous places, the *satyagrahis* kept themselves within the hyonourable bounds of non-violent principles and thus showed their normal control over every manifestation of violent action.

The withdrawal of the Non-Cooperation Movement soon after this violent action by the Congress volunteers obviously convinced one and all of the Gandhian faith in the creed of non-violence as an article of faith and not a mere policy matter. His faith was unflinching and unwavering and no amonut of argument by any of his colleague in the party could convince him about the step which he preferred to take and adhered to it with full faith and conviction.

Gandhi had been greatly agitated over the incident at Chauri Chaura and was of the view that the people had not properly understood the utmost importance of non-violence. As long as they had not imbibed the significance of *ahimsa*, it would be dangerous to go ahead with the *satyagraha* movement, for what happened at Chauri Chaura could happen in other parts of India as well. Apart from any kind of government reaction, Gandhi and no belief in a freedom obtained through a violent struggle.<sup>30</sup>

Indeed Gandhi was fully alive to the fact that groups might be less responsive to moral considerations than individuals and that it might be far more difficult for large groups of men than for individuals to acquire the necessary non-violent discipline. But he did not discount the possibility of large groups being trained in the way of non-violence. He, in fact, refused to believe that non-violence was only for the individual

and non-violence on mass scale was against human nature.<sup>31</sup> He, however, maintained that non-violence could be exercised or practised by individuals as well as by groups, even by millions together.<sup>32</sup> The fact that large masses of people could be disciplined to act in a non-violent way under the gravest provocation was proved by successful instances of mass action in South Africa, Bardoli, Dharasana, Wadala, the North-West Frontier Province and a few other places.

Gandhi advised the rioters to atone for their sins by voluntary surrender to the law and a clean confession of their guilt. He believed that in civil disobedience there should be no excitement. He himself made a public confession of his guilt in *Young India* on 16 March 1922.<sup>33</sup>

In the following article written in his paper "Young India" Mahatma Gandhi fully explained the new position of Congressmen created by the ghastly affair of Chauri Chaura.

"God has been abundantly kind to me. He has warned me the third time that there is not as yet in India that truthful and non-violent atmosphere which and which alone can justify mass disobedience which can be at all described as civil, which means gentle, truthful, humble, knowing, wilful yet loving, never criminal and hateful.

"He warned me in 1919 when the Rowlatt Act agitation was started. Ahmedabad, Viramgam and Kheda erred; Amritsar and Kasur erred; I retraced my steps; called it a Himalayan miscalculation, humbled myself before God and man and stopped not merely mass Civil Disobedience but even my own which I know was intended to be civil and non-violent. The next time it was through the events of Bombay that God gave a terrific warning. He made me eye-witness of the deeds of the Bombay mob on the 17th November. The mob acted in the interest of non-co-operation. I announced my intention to stop the mass Civil Disobedience which was to be immediately started in Bardoli. The humiliation was greater than in 1919. But it did me good. I am sure that the nation gained by the stopping. India stood for truth and non-violence by the suspension.

'But the bitterest humiliation was still to come. Madras did give the warnings, but I heeded it not. But God spoke clearly through Chauri Chaura. I understand that the constables,

who were so brutally hacked to death, had given much provocation. They had even gone back upon the word just given by the Inspector that the people would not be molested, that when the procession had passed the stragglers were interfered with and abused by the constables. The foreman cried out for help. The mob returned. The constables opened fire. The little ammunition they had was exhausted and they retired to the thana for safety. The mob, my informant tells me, therefore, set fire to the thana. The self-imprisoned constables had to come out for dear life, and as they did so they were hacked to pieces and the mangled remains were thrown into the raging flames.

'It is claimed that no Non-cooperation volunteers had a hand in the brutality and that the mob had not only the immediate provocation but they had also a general knowledge of the high-handed tyranny of the police in that district. No provocation can possibly justify the brutal murder of men who had been rendered defenceless and who had virtually thrown themselves on the mercy of the mob. And when India claims to be non-violent and hopes to mount the Throne of Liberty through non-violent means, mob-violence, even in answer to grave provocation, is a bad augury. Suppose the non-violent disobedience of Bardoli was permitted by God to succeed; the Government had abdicated in favour of the victors of Bardoli who would control the unruly element that must be expected to perpetrate inhumanity upon due provocation? Non-violent attainment of self-government pre-supposes non-violent control over the violent elements in the country. Non-violent non-cooperators can only succeed when they have succeeded in attaining control over the hooligans of India, in other words, when the latter also have learnt patriotically or religiously to refrain from their violent activities at least while the campaign of non-co-operation is going on. The tragedy at Chauri Chaura, therefore, roused me thoroughly.

'But what about your manifesto to the Viceroy and your rejoinder to his reply? Spoke the voice of Satan. It was the bitterest cup of humiliation to drink. "Surely it is cowardly to withdraw the next day after pompous threats to the Government and promises to the people of Bardoli." Thus Satan's invitation was to deny Truth and therefore Religion, to deny God himself.

I put my doubts and troubles before the Working Committee and other associates whom I found near me. They did not all agree with me at first. Some of them probably do not even now agree with me. But never has a man been blessed perhaps with colleagues and associates so considerate and forgiving as I have. They understood my difficulty and patiently followed my argument. The result is before the public in the shape of the resolutions of the Working Committee. The drastic reversal of practically the whole of the aggressive programme may be politically unsound and unwise, but there is no doubt that it is religiously sound and I venture to assure the doubters that the country will have gained by my humiliation and confession of error.

The only virtues I want to claim are truth and non-violence. I lay no claims to super human powers. I want none. I wear the same corruptible flesh that the weakest of my fellow-beings wear and am, therefore, as liable to err as any. My services have many limitations, but God has up to now blessed them in spite of the imperfections. For, confession of terror is like a broom that sweeps away dirt and leaves the surface cleaner than before. I feel stronger for my confession. And the cause must prosper for the retracing. Never has man reached his destination by persistence in deviation from the straight path.

It has been urged that Chauri Chaura cannot affect Bardoli. There is danger, it is argued, only if Bardoli is weak enough to be swayed by Chauri Chaura and is betrayed into violence. I have no doubt, whatsoever on that account. The people of Bardoli are in my opinion the most peaceful in India. But Bardoli is but a speck on the map of India. Its efforts cannot succeed unless there is perfect co-operation from the other parts. Bardoli's disobedience will be civil only when the other parts of India remain non-violent. Just as the addition of a grain of arsenic to a pot of milk renders it unfit as food, so will the civility of Bardoli prove unacceptable by the addition of the deadly poison from Chauri Chaura. The latter represents India as much as Bardoli.

'Chauri Chaura is after all an aggravated symptom. I have never imagined that there has been no violence, mental or physical, in the places where repression is going on. Only I

have believed, and the pages of "Young India" amply prove, that the repression is out of all proportions to the insignificant popular violence in the areas of repression. The determined holding of meetings in prohibited areas I do not call violence. The violence I am referring to is the throwing of brick-bats, or intimidation and coercion practised in stray cases. As a matter of act in civil disobedience there should be no excitement. Civil Disobedience is a preparation for mute suffering. Its effect is marvellous though unperceived and gentle. But I regarded certain amount of excitement as inevitable, certain amount of unintended violence even pardonable, i.e., I did not consider Civil Disobedience impossible in somewhat imperfect conditions. Under perfect conditions disobedience when civil is hardly felt. But the present movement is admittedly a dangerous experiment under fairly adverse conditions.

The tragedy of Chauri Chaura is really the index-finger. It shows the way India may easily go if drastic precautions be not taken. If we are not to evolve violence out of non-violence, it is quite clear that we must hastily retrace our steps and reestablish an atmosphere of peace, rearrange our programme and not think to starting mass civil disobedience until we are sure of peace being retained in spite of much civil disobedience being started and in spite of Government provocation. We must be sure of unauthorised portions not starting mass civil disobedience.

As it is, the Congress organisation is still imperfect and its instructions, are still perfunctorily carried out. We have not established Congress Committee in every one of the villages. Where we have, they are not perfectly amenable to our instructions. We have not probably more than one crore of members on the roll. We are in the middle of February; not many have paid the four-anna subscription for the current year. Volunteers are indifferently enrolled; they do not conform to all that conditions of their pledge. They do not even wear hand-spun and hand-woven *Khaddar*. All the Hindu volunteers have not yet purged themselves of the sin of untouchability. All are not free from the taint of violence. Not by their imprisonment are we going to win "Swaraj" or serve the holy cause of the "Khilafat", or attain the ability to stop payments to faithless servants. Some of us err in spite of ourselves. But some others

among us sin wilfully. They join volunteer corps well knowing that they are not, and do not intend to remain, non-violent. We are thus untruthful even as we hold the Government to be untruthful. We dare not enter the kingdom of liberty with mere lip homage to truth and non-violence.

Suspension of mass Civil Disobedience and subsidence of excitement are necessary for further progress; indeed, indispensable to prevent further retrogression. I hope, therefore, that by suspension every Congress man or woman will not only not feel disappointed but he or she will feel relieved of the burden of unreality and of national sin.

Let the opponent glory in our humiliation or so called defeat. It is better to be charged with cowardice and weakness than to be guilty of denial of our oath and sin against God. It is million times better to "appear" untrue before the world than to be nature to ourselves.

And so, for me the suspension of mass Civil Disobedience and other minor activities that calculated to keep up excitement is not enough penance for my having been the instrument, howsoever involuntary, of brutal violence by the people at Chauri Chaura. I must undergo personal cleansing. I must become a fitter instrument able to register the slightest variation in the moral atmosphere about me. My prayers must have a much deeper truth and humility about them than they evidence. And for me there is nothing so helpful and cleansing as a fast accompanied by the necessary mental co-operation.

I know that the metal attitude is everything. Just as a prayer may be merely a mechanical intonation as that of a bird, so may a fast be a mere mechanical torture of the flesh. Such mechanical contrivances are valueless for the purpose intended. Again, just as a mechanical chant may result in the modulation of voice, a mechanical fast may result in purifying the body. Neither will touch the soul within.

But a fast undertaken for fuller self-expression for the attainment of the spirit's supremacy over the flesh, is a most powerful factor in one's evolution. After deep consideration, therefore, I am imposing on myself a five days' continuous fast permitting myself water. It commenced on Sunday evening, it ends on Friday evening. This is the least I must do. I have

taken into consideration the All India Congress Committee meeting in front of me. I have in mind the anxious pain, even the five days' fast will cost many friends, but I can no longer postpone the penance nor lessen it.

I urge co-workers not to copy my example. The motive in their case will be lacking. They are not the originators of Civil Disobedience. I am in the unhappy position of a surgeon proved skill less to deal with an admittedly dangerous case. I must either abdicate or acquire greater skill. Whilst the personal penance is not only necessary and obligatory on me, the exemplary self-restraint prescribed by the Working Committee is surely sufficient penance for every one else. It is no small penance, and if sincerely carried out, it can become infinitely more real and better than fasting. What can be richer and more fruitful than a greater fulfilment of the vow of non-violence in thought, word and deed or the spread of that spirit? It will be more than food for me during the week to observe that comrades are all silently and without idle discussion engaged in fulfilling the constructive programme sketched by the Working Committee in enlisting Congress members, after making sure that they understand the Congress creed of truth and non-violence for the attainment of *Swaraj*, in daily and religiously spinning for a fixed time, in introducing the wheel of prosperity and freedom in every home, in visiting "untouchable" homes and finding out their wants, in inducing national schools to receive "untouchable" children, in organising social service especially designed to find a common platform for every variety of man and woman, and in visiting the homes which the drink curse is desolating, in establishing real panchayats and in organising National Arbitration Courts. The workers will be better engaged in these activities than in fasting. I hope. Therefore, that no one will join me in fasting either through false sympathy or in ignorant conception of the spiritual value of fasting.

All fasting and all penance must, as far as possible, be secret. But my fasting is both a penance and a punishment, and a punishment has to be public. It is penance for me and punishment for those whom I try to serve—for whom I love to live and would equally love to die. They have unintentionally sinned against the laws of the Congress, through they were

sympathisers, if not actually connected with it. Probably they hacked the constables, their countrymen and fellow-beings, with my name on their lips. The only way love punishes is by suffering. I cannot even wish them to be arrested. But I would let them know that I would suffer for their breach of the Congress creed. I would advise those who feels guilty and repentant to hand themselves voluntarily to the Government for punishment and make a clean confession. I hope that the workers in the Gorakhpur District will leave no stone unturned to find out the evil-doers and urge them to deliver themselves into custody. But whether the murderers accept my advice or not I would like them to know that they have seriously interfered with Swaraj operations, that in being the cause of postponement of the movement in Bardoli they have injured the very cause they probably intended to serve. I would like them to know too that this movement is not a cloak or a preparation for violence. I would at any rate suffer every humiliation, every torture, absolute ostracism and death itself to prevent the movement from becoming violent or a precursor of violence.

I make my penance public also because I am now denying myself the opportunity of sharing their lot with the prisoners. The immediate issue has again shifted. We can no longer press for the withdrawal of notifications or discharge of prisoners. They and we must suffer for the crime of Chauri Chaura. The incident proves, whether we wish it or not, the unity of life. All, including even the administrators, must suffer. Chauri Chaura must stiffen the Government, must still further corrupt the police and the reprisals that will follow must further demoralise the people. The suspension and the penance will take us aback to the position we occupied before the tragedy. By strict discipline and purification we regain the moral confidence required for demanding the withdrawal of notifications and the discharge of prisoners.

If we learn the full lesson of the tragedy, we can turn the curse into a blessing. By becoming truthful and non-violent, both in spirit and in deed, and by making the Swadeshi, that is, the "Khaddar" programme complete, we can establish full "Swaraj" and redress the Khilafat and the Punjab wrongs without a single person having to offer Civil Disobedience.<sup>34</sup>



Throughout 1921, the first year of the Non-Cooperation Movement, a group of Moderate politicians was much opposed to Gandhi's campaign and showed its willingness and inclination to seek cooperation with the government by maintaining their positions in the reformed legislative councils. Srinivasa Sastri voiced their feelings thus in a letter to his friend on 11 October 1921. 'You say "after all he is countryman." So he is. Does it mean we should fold our hands, while he wreaks his unrelenting, disastrous will on the country? I do not agree. We must combat and counteract all we can. If Government curbs his freedom, it does not come a movement too soon. My sympathy, my support must go to Government. I cannot let my regard for Gandhi swallow up my love of the country.'<sup>35</sup>

Gandhi's action seemed all the more regrettable to his numerous followers in the Congress organization because it happened at a time when optimism reigned supreme and when the campaign was advancing throughout the country.<sup>36</sup> Louis Fischer correctly diagnosed the whole situation in a few words: At a word from Gandhi India would have risen in revolt. The word was not said: instead all the enthusiastic and sacrificing efforts were wasted to thrown away at the altar of the doctrine of non-violence.

He (Gandhi) and always maintained that he participated in politics to attain certain specified ends, and not for the sake of political power itself; and when the non-cooperation movement jeopardized those ends, he withdrew, unwilling to hang the idealist within him by the noose of the professional politician.<sup>37</sup>

The sudden suspension of the Non-Cooperation Movement belied the expectations of the people who were promised *Swaraj* within a year. The different items of political programme as laid down in the resolutions of the Calcutta Congress in 1920 and endorsed at the Nagpur Congress met with no success which could satisfy the aspirations of the masses.

It is, however, quite apparent that the mental protest, anger, criticism and dissatisfaction amongst the Congressmen at this point of time, were subdued taking well into consideration the kind of party discipline they were bound to observe. Ultimately their sober and well-thoughtout reflection convinced them that what their leader, the initiator of the movement, Gandhi, had done was an act of soundest statesmanship.

C.F. Andrews' assessment of Gandhi may convince many of us when he has said that Gandhi had a mind of his own and he was not a person to play second fiddle to any Indian leader of the time. As Gandhi himself wrote to Srinivasa Sastri in 1920:....at my time of life and with views firmly formed on several matters I could only join an organization to affect its policy and not be affected by it.<sup>38</sup>

Prof. Rajni Kothari in his work on *Politics in India* has stated, He (Gandhi) realized clearly what few before him did, that the urbanized middle class alone did not provide a sufficient basis for national awakening. The task was to penetrate the masses, to arouse them from their state of apathy and isolation, to provide them with self-confidence and a positive clan in place of both the defensive postures of the moderates and the inferiority complex of the 'anti-Western' radicals, and to confront the authorities with proof that they were dealing not with a small group of agitators, but with tens of thousands of people organized and disciplined into a great movement, drawn from all over the country.<sup>39</sup>

An objective assessment of both the success and the failure has been befittingly worded by no less a prominent leader than C.R. Das in his presidential address at the Gaya Session of the Indian National Congress in December 1922.<sup>40</sup> It is assumed that a movement must either succeed or fail, whereas the truth is that human movements—I am speaking of genuine movements—neither altogether succeed nor altogether fail. Every genuine movement proceeds from an ideal and the ideal is higher than the achievement. Was the Non-Cooperation Movement in India a success? Yes, a mighty success when we think of the *Swaraj* which it has succeeded in awakening throughout the length and breadth of the vast country. It is a great success when we think of the practical result of such awakening in the money which the nation contributed in the enrolment of the members of the Indian National Congress and in the boycott of foreign cloth. I go further and say that the practical achievement also consists of the loss of prestige suffered by educational institutions and the courts of law and the reformed councils throughout the country... Yet it must be admitted that from another point of view, when we assess the measure of our success in the spirit of arithmetic, we are face

to face with "the pithy done" and the undone vast". I say to our critics: I admit we have failed in many directions but will you also not admit our success where we have succeeded.

The Congress Enquiry Committee in its report testified to the general awakening of the masses to their political rights and privileges; the total loss of faith in the present system of government; the belief and conviction that it was only through its own efforts that India could hope to be free; the faith in the Congress as the only organization which could direct national effort to gain freedom and the utter failure of repression to cow down the people. 'Our own personal observation in the course of our tour round the whole country fully corroborates the evidence on these points. We have found the general population permeated with the indomitable spirit of a great national awakening unprecedented in the history of the human race for its wide sweep and rapid growth...'

Thus the movement, on the whole, initiated the people to a new faith and new hope and inspired them with a new confidence in their power to fight for freedom irrespective of hardships and punishments inflicted by the government. The Congress no longer remained a deliberative assembly, but it became an organized force pledged to freedom of the country.

During the course of the movement the Government of India showed a sense of ambivalence to arrest and convict Gandhi. It probably expected that his movement might fizzle out without achieving the desired goal of *swaraj* which he had promised to the nation. The Viceroy also showed reluctance to put Gandhi behind the bars as this action would have made him a 'martyr' and would have drawn numerous adherents to his cause. The government was also fearful of the unrest that might have followed with his arrest.

The government source stated, 'A prosecution seems inevitable sooner or later unless Gandhi give up his programme or cores to terms, and if we are certain to be forced to such a prosecution, the present is not an unsuitable time at the beginning of the cold weather to initiate such a prosecution and deal with any disorder.

'Gandhi is pledged to secure *swaraj* by the end of December and his failure to do so may lead him to give up the movement

and will certainly naturally discredit him... He is not only regarded as a great national hero, but by the ignorant, as semi-divine.

'His confinement in Jail would draw many adherents to his cause and it is probable that he knows this. He certainly wants to be made a martyr.

'The result of prosecution would be a great increase in arrest and probably disorder just on the eve of the Prince of Wales' visit.

'It we do not prosecute Gandhi at this moment, we must expect *hartals* and abstentions from the ceremonies.<sup>41</sup>

Regarding Gandhi's conviction, Chelmsford informed Montagu on 4 August 1920, '.... Our policy is working out well, and I do not propose to take any action unless I have an absolute clear case in which In can get conviction.... We must wait until we have grounds which will justify us in proceeding against him....<sup>42</sup>

In the first week of January 1922, Lord Reading gave vent to his feelings thus: There is an opinion that under the guise of non-violence Gandhi is really preparing eventually for revolution by violence.... My own impressions at the moment are against prosecuting him merely for speeches at the Congress, but to take action the moment he takes a definite step..... Nevertheless, I am quite prepared to face the consequences of Gandhi's arrest.<sup>43</sup>

Montagu called Gandhi a 'mischievous individual'. 'No sooner did I become convinced that Mr. Gandhi was dangerous to the Indian Empire.... I explained that any friendship which existed must cease'.<sup>44</sup>

The Secretary of State, however, was very keen to seek the opinion of the Law Officers before Gandhi's conviction, 'Although it is apparent that Lloyd contemplates proceeding against Gandhi for sedition.<sup>45</sup>

Till the second week of February 1922, Reading found himself in difficult circumstances. He stated, 'We are going through a difficult time here, and in the face of the announced campaign of civil disobedience, shall, I fear, have disturbances to quell and a good deal of trouble. But I don't doubt the ultimate result, although I would not dare to prophesy how far

the campaign may go, or whether it will be extended throughout the country.<sup>46</sup>

Gandhi was arrested on 10 March 1922 and his trial began on 18 March in the court of C.N. Broomfield, District and Sessions Judge, Ahmedabad. It lasted for only hundred minutes and the Mahatma was sentenced to six year's imprisonment. Sarojini Naidu who was an eye-witness to this 'great trial' observed: 'The most epic event of modern times ended quickly. The pent-up emotions of the people burst in a storm of sorrow as a long, slow procession moved towards him in a mournful pilgrimage of farewell, clinging to the hands that had toiled so incessantly, bowing over the feet that had journeyed so continuously in the service of his country. In the midst of all this poignant scene of many-voiced and myriad-hearted grief he stood, untroubled, in his transcendent simplicity, the embodied symbol of the Indian nation—its living sacrifice and sacrament in one. The might Mahatma had was to the utmost ends of the earth, but his destination remains sunchanged in the hearts of his people who are both the heirs and the stewards of the matchless dreams and his matchless deeds.

Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya while addressing a large and distinguished gathering including some members of the Legislature declared that the 'Government had committed a great blunder in arresting Mr. Gandhi and hoped that they would soon undo their mistake.'<sup>47</sup> The *Advocate of India* opined, 'Mr. Gandhi's arrest adds to the plitical excitement created by Mr. Montagu's resignation'.<sup>48</sup> The Congress Working Committee recorded on 18 March: 'The Working Committee while realising that Mahtma Gandhi's conviction deprives the country of the guidance of its universally trusted and beloved leader, rejoices that through him India delivers to the world, even her bandage, her ancient message of truth and non-violence'.

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## CHAPTER : 8

# The Assessment

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The Non-Cooperation Movement created a sense of new kind of reaction in the minds of the British Bureaucracy in India and the home Government in London. The movement thought not for a long-time shook their self-confidence as well as their belief in the rightness of their imperial mission, doubts of varied nature began to trouble them and one serious item in such doubts was the justification of the British rule on the foreign soil. The results of their economic, cultural, educational as well as administrative policies began to be assailed. Gandhi and his in of action were highly complex problems which provoked debates at various levels. The political consciousness enkindled in the minds of the masses had nightmarish effect on the minds of the successive Viceroys in India.

Old members of the Civil Services began resolving not to send their sons into what was once regarded as the "heaven-born service". The steel frame did not after all seem capable of sustaining for long structure of the Raj. The Secretary of State. Peel wrote to Reading: 'But of course it is exceedingly difficult here to persuade young men of the best quality to enter these (Indian) services, and I feel more that this reluctance to enter the service would only increase unless we are able to make very material improvement in the position and prospects of the services.... But evidence that is continually coming before us of the position of the services in India (mainly the Civil Services) is very serious.'

Gandhi was of the firm conviction that his movement was not at all unconstitutional as it was planned and also to be executed in a non-violent way, without an element of secrecy involved in it. The British government expected much obstruction in the smooth functioning of the administrative machinery and Lord Chelmsford, therefore was highly critical at its very inauguration. He called it 'The most foolish scheme'



which, according to him, would bring ruin to those who had my stake in the government. He also tried to arouse the fears of the propertied class which was suffering during the movement.

It was the growing mass unrest among the peasants and the industrial workers which brought about a change in the Congress attitude of cooperation in 1919 to non-cooperation in 1920. But once the non-cooperation began, it galvanised further the agrarian movement which received an impetus from the spirit of general defiance unleashed by the non-cooperation campaign of 1920-22. The peasants discovered in the non-cooperation of the Calcutta and Nagpur sessions of the Congress something useful for their own struggle. They began to take great interest in the programme of non-payment of taxes and boycott of law courts. The establishment of *panchayats* to settle their disputes was a point common to both the *Kisan Sabha* and the non-cooperation programmes. Jawaharlal Nehru saw behind the great national upheaval of 1921 the shadow of the 'agrarian trouble' and 'a rising working class movement'. For the time being they overlapped and all pulled together under the banner of an 'Indian nationalism'.<sup>1</sup>

For about two years, the masses of India, representing some of the prominent categories of the society, had been enthusiastically astir with all manner of manifestations of unrest, disaffection, anger and defiance. Pledges taken earlier, at the time of the inauguration of the Non-Cooperation Movement, were repeatedly inculcated in the minds of the volunteers who were advised to function under discipline. The new spirit of nationalism was no more seriously concerned with the constitutional reforms, a demand made during the first two decades of the twentieth century. It was now well-prepared for repudiation of the *Raj*, considered as 'unwanted' foreign government. The example of this kind of model was glaringly visible when the Duke of Connaught paid a visit to India in 1921. The visit of the symbol of British Imperialism at a time when the pitch of resentment, and feelings of *anti-Raj* had greatly provoked the people who showed him black flags and cried themselves hoarse with anti-British slogans. The observance of *hartals* in the prominent commercial centres of the major cities and towns was a glaring phenomenon.

The persistent propaganda on a large scale tinged with the severe criticism of the functioning of the government and the bureaucracy led to the formation of rival national institutions. The Congress leadership won favour with the masses by launching popular measures like the no-tax and no-rent campaigns. The people were greatly encouraged to refuse to pay municipal, *chaukidari* and local board taxes. Considerable success was achieved in some areas of Madras and Bengal in this regard, but the breach forest regulations and laws was a glaring phenomenon in Madras presidency. In all these models, *satya grahis* built up their strength and vitality through sacrifice, abstinence and suffering and self-deprivations.

While giving his assessment about the excitement, sympathy and participation of the people of Bihar in this movement, Dr. Rajendra Prasad stated in his *Autobiography* thus: 'Public meetings were the order of the day in Bihar. There was not one little corner of the province where the Congress did not penetrate. Congress workers were active every day, explaining the Congress programme. The whole province was agog. I toured the entire length and breadth of Bihar in 1920 and for the first time I saw the whole province and made innumerable contacts. Meetings of 5,000 to 10,000 were quite common.'<sup>2</sup>

On the eve of the Bengal Provincial Conference held at Barisal in April 1921, C.R. Das stated, '*Swaraj* is our birthright, it is divine gift. When you realise yourself by penance, you shall get freedom from within and without. We look to others for our education, commerce and government. This is bondage. We must get rid of that. We cannot even clothe our mothers and sisters. What servility. We must be free men and not bondsmen as at present. The yearning for *Swaraj* is meant for our liberation. We are inimical to nobody—ours is a peaceful struggle'.<sup>3</sup>

Gandhi enkindled the spirit of sacrifice, selfless service without any kind of violent means. This was done through his speeches and writings in *Young India*. He wrote, 'Men must fill the jails. Men must prove to the Government that the awakening is not confined to a few men but it has permeated the masses, that spirit of non-violence possesses not merely a selected number but that it possesses the best part of India.'<sup>4</sup>

Gandhi was quite confident of the strength, cooperation and unity of the people of India. 'I believe and everybody must grant that no Government can exist for a single moment without the cooperation of the people willing of forced, and if people suddenly withdrew their cooperation in every detail, the Government will come to a standstill'.<sup>5</sup> He sought the support of lawyers, doctors, traders, money lenders, various types of functionaries in the villagers, priests, ulemas, cultivators, women and students. Indeed, he had much impact and appeal for the lowliest in the Indian society. And when we actual analyse Gandhi's lead and control in this movement, the fact about his dependence and cooperation of a common Indian becomes quite evident.

The flock of people which assembled to greet and welcome Gandhi at a small village Sahara in Bijnore district of Uttar Pradesh showed tremendous interest, excitement and enthusiasm. The government sources stated, 'Never before has any political leader or perhaps even a religious leader, in his own lifetime stirred the masses to their very depths throughout the country and received the homage of so many people, Hindus and Moslems alike. His influence is certainly phenomenal and quite unprecedented.'<sup>6</sup>

In July 1921, the *Bengali* depicted the charismatic personality of Gandhi thus. 'Being present at the various meetings that were held at Calcutta on the 30th June, we have been stuck with two things, that a new spirit has taken hold of the lower class people, and secondly, the majority of the people in India have accepted Mr. Gandhi as leader.... What a leadership! Such a leadership in politics has never been known before.'<sup>7</sup>

In the matter of the organization of *swadeshi*, the result achieved at spinning wheels were marvellous in their contents. Undoubtedly, the Congress volunteers at district, *tahsil*, *taluka* and village level worked with much interest and energy and succeeded in popularising *khadi* amongst the masses. As a result of these efforts, a sizeable population of India became *Khadi*-minded and began to patronise articles manufactured indigenously. The propagation of *Khaddar* as an essential item was indeed a positive aspect of the boycott programme in the Non-Cooperation Movement. Gandhi and his followers

emphasised with force that foreign cloth had forced partial idleness on the Indian peasant and had deprived him of the additional occupation of spinning and weaving he had practised in a mass scale, in every nook and corner of India, earlier. Undoubtedly, the production and use of *Khadi* was to revive the old living contact between the urban and the rural classes. Besides, being self-reliant, it was to engender into them the sense of political consciousness. Gandhi would not like the boycott movement to end in sentimental excitement. He resolved to make it a part and parcel of his comprehensive constructive programme through the encouragement of hand-spinning and *Khaddar*. The *Khaddar* scheme was calculated not only to produce a political awakening of the first magnitude, but was also intended to make the poor peasants whether men or women, conscious of their strength and made them effective partners in the fight for the country's freedom.<sup>8</sup>

The submission of resignations from their titles and official honours was indeed a unique phenomenon in the programme of the movement. It was done at a large scale throughout India. But still there were persons who did not wish to resign as they enjoyed numerous privileges under the *Raj*. Such a class comprised of big zamindars, landlords, business magnates and a few others. However, whatever the response was, there resignations lowered the highest sanctity of the awards offered to Indians by the British government.

The direct participation of the masses led to the formation of panchayats, Kisan Sabhas, arbitration courts, the temperance societies and the group of men and women to enforce the boycott of foreign cloth. Much success was achieved by these organizations. But the success was limited in the campaign against educational institutions, boycott of law courts, renunciation of titles and honorary offices and the boycott of reformed councils. The success achieved in some items of the constructive programme was quite a glaring phenomenon amongst the lower classes inhabiting in towns where their participation was spontaneous and voluntary. In the rural tracts, the movement did not touch upon at the all-India level although the peasantry was effected in parts of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, the United Provinces and the Assam valley. The government source stated in early 1921. '... the idea of non-

cooperation has become familiar to the masses into the towns and even to some of the larger villagers'.<sup>9</sup>

The response of the people for their participation in the movement was spontaneous. The leadership wished them not to fear from arrest, harassment, flogging, conviction, suspension from schools and colleges, dismissal from government jobs and attachment of their properties. They were advised 'to widen the gates of prison and to enter them as the bridegroom enters a bride's chamber'. They were required to make use of the 'sword of self-sacrifice' and take the maximum risk even if they had to sacrifice their lives during the freedom struggle.

On some occasions the elements of undisciplined leading to violence in some areas was a glaring phenomenon during 1920-22. The non-violent *satyagrahis* pledged to follow the Gandhian principles did not in all cases adhere to the basic tenets of *satyagrahis*. They behaved in a highly questionable way which did effect the smooth functioning of *satyagraha*. It seems that the leadership, at some levels could not properly educate the masses or where they could educate, they failed to have effective control over them. The control over every manifestation of violence appeared to be much taxed. There may be any kind of variation or unevenness of developments during the movement in various regions, but it is quite obvious that a common thread ran through all these campaigns. The masses, at no point of time, submitted passively when they were faced with social, economic and legal injustice. The elements of consistency and continuity in the movement was the main characteristic in the per-Chauri Chaura tragedy time.

Obviously the movement was not without everlasting political effects. Its failure to achieve *swaraj* was a temporary phase. A consistent struggle against the *Raj* had begun. With its unexpected and sudden violent happening at Chauri Chaura, the movement though withdrawn, its impact did not subside. The gains were the general awakening of the masses to their political rights and privileges; the total loss of faith in the existing system of the government; the inculcation of hope and belief that it would only be through their efforts that the country could hope to be free; the ardent faith in the aims, objects and function of the Congress which could properly

direct the national efforts to achieve independence and, last but not the least, the utter failure of the policy of repression of the British government to suppress the sentiments of the British government to suppress the sentiments of the Congress volunteers.

Wellington, the Governor of Bombay in a note to the Home Member, Government of India, gave vent to his feelings thus: 'The non-cooperation movement, whatever may be its other achievements has spread political ideas among the masses of the people and their placid content has been disturbed.'<sup>10</sup>

The movement failed to bestow *swaraj* upon the people of India as promised by Gandhi at the time of its inauguration. The middle class, in fact, did not support it wholeheartedly. A complete national upsurge supported by all the classes would have shaken the foundation of the *Raj* or it would have brought the *Raj* to some kind of compromise, agreement or submission. The numerical strength of British bureaucracy in the civil departments and officials in the armed forces was comparatively very low to the population of India as a whole at that time. A bigger response in terms of the population of the country would have brought the spectacular results. The reasons for this kind of response could be numerous i.e. the primitive means of communications. Lack of contact between the villages and the towns, under-developed media of press, paucity of funds and much-needed financial support, want of well-organized and well-disciplined leadership after the arrest of front-rank leaders, violent behaviour of volunteers in some regions, and last but not the least, the severe and repressive measures of the *Raj* to suppress the movement by *lathi* charges, firing, arresting and convicting Congress leaders and volunteers.

Whereas, the movement got momentum, the repression of the government was on the increases. The government at any cost, did not recognize the potency of the movement as it tried to satisfy itself with the assessment that the Gandhian movement lacked strength, and mass support, of whatever dimensions he could achieve, was due to the economic backwardness and the lack of unemployment opportunities for the people. In an optimistic note to the Prime Minister, Reading remarked that 'the phenomenon of economic distress would be overcome with the next mansion and a fine harvest as a result

thereof. The British thus discounted Gandhi's movement.... Lord Reading sanctioned Gandhi's arrest at a time which he thought was safest for the *Raj*. Gandhi was arrested in March 1922, tried and sentenced to six years' imprisonment.'

The Non-Cooperation Movement proved effective amongst the agricultural classes in Awadh and the United Provinces, Andhra Pradesh, Bombay, Bihar and Orissa. It fostered the Kisan Sabha Movement in the United Provinces during 1920-22 under the guidance of Jawaharlal Nehru. The peasantry rose against the repressive measures of landlords in Bihar as well. Besides there was the defiance in the payment of revenue charges and also deviances in observance of forest laws in Assam and Madras Presidency. The same kind of defiance of the non-payment of revenue charges in Bengal and non-payment of the Chaukidari Taxes was observed in Bengal and Bihar. In fact the peasantry had gained confidence to the extent that they had begun to believe that with the attainment of *swaraj* all revenue charges hitherto collected from them by the *Raj* would be remitted for all time to come.

Thus the campaign of non-violent non-cooperation mainly covered the urban areas in its earlier phase, but in the course of its development it spread to the villages also. The message of non-cooperation reached numerous villages. 'A host of Congress workers in each district went about the rural areas with the new message to which they often added, rather vaguely, the removal of Kisan grievances.... Most of the principal workers were common to the two movements.' 'Go to the villages' was the slogan given by the non-cooperation movement. While every attempt was made by the Congress leadership to draw the peasantry to their organisation through the medium of non-cooperation and the government blamed them for fomenting agrarian unrest which arose in reality out of the economic grievances of the peasants, it was, nevertheless, fully conscious of the divergence of aims that existed between the nationalist and the peasant movements. *The Independent*, a leading supporter of the nationalist movement thus brought out the difference between the two movements: 'The *Kisan* movement is directed against the tyranny of the Taluqdars and their privileged position which facilitates the perpetration of untold wrogs on the *Kisans*. The non-cooperation movement is directed

against the British bureaucracy. It has nothing to do with the Taluqdars excepts to win them for national work. But it is argued that the advice is given to the *Kisans* to boycott law-courts, to go to jail, to establish Panchayats, etc. which are features of non-cooperation programme. The *Kisan Sabha* may make some item from the non-cooperation programme of their own.<sup>11</sup>

Gandhi's decision to sponsor the issue of Khilafat both at national and international levels and his sincere and unquestionable endeavour to seek involvement of his ardent followers throughout the period of the movement were most significant so far as the question of Hindu-Muslim unity was concerned. His shrewd political alliance with the Ali Brothers who put in their sincere efforts of propagating the ideology of Indian National Congress, vied with other leaders in touring many areas of the country apprising the masses of the importance of the cause sponsored by the Congress.

Undoubetly the stirring speeches made by the prominent Muslim leader like the Ali Brothers did contribute towards the awakening of the masses who were approached in various regions during 1920-21. The members of the audience which usually consisted of the members of the lower middle class including peasants, petty shopkeepers, government servants, in the lower strata, teachers, students and labourers were much influenced by their speeches tinged with Indian nationalism. This engendered in them the feelings of unity of all reflections and the sense of patriotism. Such a speech was delivered by Maulana Shaukat Ali at Badaun on 14 May 1921. 'All the Government business is performed by our Indian brothers. In ever department—police, revenue, army and others—all the work is done by the Indians.'<sup>12</sup> It was a spontaneous sarcasm for the alien government whose instruments for the alien government whose instruments for running the machinery of the administration were mostly Indians.

The humiliating terms of peace imposed by the Allies were unquestionably unacceptable to the Turkish nationalists who had mustered strong under the leadership of Kamal Pasha who was determined to offer resistance to the Allies and the Sultan of Turkey who was their instrument in this deed. The



imposition of peace terms upon Turkey by Great Britain with the active armed support of Greece led to the formulation of a military strategy which could not succeed in face of severe armed opposition by Kamal Pasha and his men. This spectacular success led the Allies to reinforce the Treaty of Sevres in a revised form a decision of which was finalised by powers at Laussane. The revised Treaty, in fact, gave to the Turks for what they had been aspiring for the last few years. Their crucial religious problem thus solved, the Muslims of India began to show scant interest in the Gandhian movement. Moreover, with the passage of time, the Turks began questioning the utility of the institution of Khilafat which they now thought, with renewed ideology, as out of harmony with the existing situation. With this kind of thinking they proposed to diminish the temporal authority of the Khilafat and ultimately abolished this institution at an opportune moment. Its abolition also led the Indian Muslims to revise their political strategy—a strategy which in a few years made them to demand separate electorates along with a few other concessions which placed them in a separate political camp.

The participants of the Sikhs in the Non-Cooperation Movement is quite evident from the letter which Lala Lajpat Rai, the president of the Punjab Provincial Congress Committee, wrote to Mahatma Gandhi on 3 December 1921.<sup>13</sup> 'The Sikh non-cooperators have set a noble example... The Sikh community has so far kept its temper admirably well in spite of the provocations given. Most of the arrests have been made in the presence of hundreds and thousands.... Gur Sikh friends deserve all the praise one can bestow on brave, noble, sufferers in the cause of truth '

The emergence of the masses as a potent and significant political factor and the assimilation of agrarian and labour interests in the political demand were important elements; so also was the growing communal harmony which Gandhi cherished, propagated and put in his best effort to achieve.

Undoubtedly, it was a tremendous political gain to the people from the movement which is not lost for more than one-and-a-half years. It engendered the feeling of active participation amongst different sections of the society at an all-India level. Its non-violent character did not in any way minimise its main

characteristics of a fight, anger, dissatisfaction and a joint action against the *Raj*. The anti-British feelings amongst the people dwelling in cities, towns and village received a big boost. Numerous *satyagrahis*, men, women and college and school going students became conscious of Gandhian leadership which afforded them a new purpose, a weapon of non-violence and a new identity. Thus Gandhi became a symbol of national resistance, representing the spirit of revolt amongst the masses of India.

The movement, though lasted for hardly two years, did provide political training, sense of discipline, organization and joint ventures; forbearance and the will and determination to offer the supreme sacrifice for the sacred cause of the country and last but not the least, it inculcated deep-rooted dissatisfaction against the *Raj* which did not end till independence was achieved in 1947.

The practicability of romantic Gandhian slogan promising 'Swaraj in one year' to the millions of people was not a glaring phenomenon in the early years of 1920s when British imperialism could easily belie Indian political a separations sponsored and supported by any leader of the time. The slogan, no doubt, was an effective Gandhian weapon to organize and mobilize propel of different walks of life in cities, towns and villages and helped him to seek their support under the flag of the Congress which considered that great change was at the evil in India in the near future. But when Gandhi very shrewdly put forward two preconditions before the people of India for the realization of this aim, it became fairly difficult to achieve the desired goal. The observance of strict discipline and non-violent behaviour from millions of people of India—in North, South, West, East and Central regions of the country—were the precondition of the typical Gandhian style of launching an anti-*Raj* movement. This Kind of model placed before the nation was like something demanding a very high price on the political plane for achieving the highest political aim for a nation of about thirty crores of people. With the passage of time this kind of model could not be maintained by the participants in the movement. The reasons were obvious. A huge country with it teeming millions professing different religions and creeds, engulfed with regional and local issues

raised with the bureaucratic repression could not give what Gandhi wanted. Probably this kind of response from the mass was expected and a natured politician of Gandhian's stature knew it well that the Non-Cooperation Movement—the first of its kind in the history of India against the *Raj*, was not to bring forth results spectacular in nature—a hope and promise given to the people during the movement. Instead he expected that this kind of agitation, a model which he had built up with cooperation of the masses of India, would definitely be an eye-opener for the *Raj* which would not fail to recognize the great force, strength and power which Gandhi had gained with the mobilization of a huge number of followers in various regions of the country. Gandhi, indeed, was not unaware of the hard fact that the British rulers very firmly entrenched in the body-politic of the country would not come to an agreement of any kind which would make them to leave the shores of India. He, therefore, built up a scope for more and more non-violent agitational approach which he made use of in 1930s and 1940s.

The question of council entry to wreck the constitution from inside led to a serious debate amongst the prominent leaders of the Congress. This aspect was seriously magnified soon after the suspension of the Non-Cooperation Movement and the arrest of Gandhi. All efforts, at various levels, to reach a compromise for the maintenance of unity in the Congress party were of no avail and consequently a split became a glaring phenomenon. The pro-changers and no-changes as they were called, professed a different line of thinking for the council entry. Whereas, the first led by Motilal Nehru and C.R. Das sponsored the idea of council entry, the second led by Rajendra Prasad and Vallabhbhai Patel and supported by Gandhi opposed this programme. Each accused each other and the compromise of any kind appeared to be a difficult proposition.

The formation of the Swaraji Party was the result of the efforts of pro-clangers who could push through their political programme of council entry in the special session of the Congress held in Delhi in September 1923 under the presidentship of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and in Cocanada in December 1923 under the presidentship of Mohamed Ali. The spectacular success, in the general elections to the provincial councils and the Legislative Assembly, of the pro-clangers and the remarkable

performance of Motilal Nehru and C.R. Das in the legislatures belied all hopes of no-clangers and when Gandhi came out of jail, he joined issue with the Swarajists thus giving an unexpected surprise to his numerous followers who supported his programme of boycotting the councils—a prominent programme of the Non-Cooperation Movement.

The organization, operation and effectiveness of the Non-Cooperation Movement had been criticised by no less important, prominent publican and political leaders than Rabindra Nath Tagore, Annie Besant, Surendranath Benerjea, Narayan Chandavarkar and some liberal leaders. Tagore called the movement as negative and destructive in its nature; Surendranath Banerjea and liberal leaders opined that it was subversive and engendered hatred towards the *Raj*; Narayan Chandavarkar stated that it was against the traditions of Indian culture and Annie Besant criticised it by saying that this movement aimed at paralysing the administrative machinery of the government.

In fact during 1920-21, the Government of India viewed the movement with all seriousness as it expected disturbances in some regions when it gained momentum after the Nagpur Congress. The Congress volunteers showed so much enthusiasm and patriotic fervour, that their respect for the authority manned by the *Raj* had vanished. In some areas where this situation became unmanageable and indiscernible had led to violent action, the authorities were put into numerous hazards. The movement posed serious political problems for the Viceroy and others. Reading wrote to Secretary of State for India on 9 February 1922, 'The Government of India do not seek to minimise in any way the fact that great anxiety is caused by the situation.'<sup>14</sup> Lloyd George, the then Governor of Bombay, expressed much worry about Gandhi and his movement. He stated, 'He [Gandhi] gave us a scare. Gandhi's was the most colossal experiment in world history and it came within an inch of success.'<sup>15</sup> Lord Templewood expressed his anxiety thus: 'It looked as if the Government of India would break down for want of the political support to direct it and manpower to work it.'<sup>16</sup>

Spoor, a prominent member of the House of Commons pleaded for Gandhian movement thus<sup>17</sup>.... There was no attempt made, at all events in all that we have heard so far, to meet what some of us regard as the legitimate demands of the India people.... It is extremely difficult for those of us who have been reared amid the purely materialistic philosophies of the West, to understand, even dimly, the reasoning of the Eastern mind, Longer mental perspectives than are possible in the rash and hurry of modern politics are required, and temperamental sympathies which, in the main, are alien to us. So it is that this non-cooperation movement is very largely misunderstood by its Western critics, but we do not get over it by calling it fanatical. We certainly shall not suppress it by imprisoning a few thousands of its leaders. The prison has not yet been built that will enclose an idea for very long; the gun is not forged yet that can destroy a will, however it may manifest itself, that is really making for freedom. I know that some people imagine that it may be possible to raise a dam that will hold the current in check; but the higher you raises your dam the greater becomes the pressure that is behind it. The great danger is that some day the dam will burst, as certainly some day in India the gaol doors will have to be opened.

'You are dealing in India with a terrible force and almost superhuman. The policy of blood and iron can no more bring peace in India than it brought peace in Ireland. It has never brought peace in any country in the world yet. You cannot defeat non-cooperation by it. Personally, I should like to see it defeated, but not by the methods that are being employed by the Government of India, backed by the British Government in this country. You can defeat non-cooperation by practising cooperation. When I say that, I mean the willing, ungrudging cooperation of British and Indians on absolutely equal terms in the maintenance of a commonwealth jointly enjoyed.

I do ask the Government really to make an attempt to face the real issue. Instead of trying to understand Gandhi we put him in jail. Such a policy and such approval as it apparently has in this House in certain quarters is a confession of hopeless incompetence. Gandhi rightly understood, is far less an isolated leader than the incarnation of what is undoubtedly the popular will. Whether we agreed with him or not does not concern my

argument, but through Gandhi the hopes of millions of Indians are finding utterance. We may disagree with his ideas entirely, but is a profound mistake to imagine that they are merely personal. The sole effect of his imprisonment is to stimulate feelings of bitterness which will ruin all possibility of a peaceful issue of this great struggle. The supremacy of British authority has been vindicated. Yes, and India is practically bankrupt. The Lancashire cotton trade is in peril. Indeed, the economic effects of this conflict are as bad as the political ones.

'Unless there is a rapid change in the whole temper of the relations of Britain and India, will be lost to Britain and Britain will be lost to India, and no one here can possibly imagine the magnitude of such a disaster as that.... I submit, further, that the practical solution of this difficulty is not so terribly hard after all. India simply wants to be master in her own house, and until she is master in her won house there will be no peace.'<sup>18</sup>

The movement greatly intensified the spirit of awakening amongst the people, earlier engendered in their hearts by the leader like Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Gopal Krishan, Bepin Chandra Pal, Lajpat Rai and many others. The national consciousness was thus permeated in various sections of India society which unified them in order to prove themselves as an integrated force for political action on a larger scale in a few years. Rajendra Prasad opined that the Non-Cooperation Movement 'Shifted politics from the Drawing Rooms of the educated and in the businessmen to the huts in the countryside to the tillers of the soil.'<sup>19</sup>

The idea of jail-going as a volunteer without any kind of second thought in mind amongst thousands of Congressmen at the call of Gandhi was a glaring phenomenon in this movement. The hardships in jails were of no consequence to them and they made it a way of life to bear them with an expression tinged with spontaneous smile on their faces. Their release at a later stage afforded them love and respect by the members of Indian society.

The Hindu-Muslim unity achieved during the Non-Cooperation Movement was a great cementing phenomenon

between the two communities which afforded them a common platform to fight for not only the solution of the Khilafat problem, but to organise and function jointly for a bigger issue, viz, the attainment of *Swaraj* for the country. In fact, both the communities came closer to each other voluntarily and willingly shared their strength and patriotic fervour unprecedented in the history of India.

Non-cooperation sprouted new hopes and infused fire and zeal into the inert, passive and demoralised people and roused and galvanised them to put up a unique and epic struggle for their political emancipation. The movement breathed a new life into Indian nationalism and engendered a new spirit of fearlessness and freedom in the people. It evoked a sense of self-sacrifice and suffering in the people who were hitherto largely 'politically apathetic'.<sup>20</sup>

The aftermath of the movement brought about a regular programme of social reforms in the society by the efforts of prominent leaders in various regions. The promotion of village industry with the introduction of *charkha* and *khadi*, the anti-untouchability measures, anti-drink propaganda, opening of *vidyapiths* and numerous such measures under the scheme of constructive programme, greatly benefited the impoverished Indian masses.

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# Glossary

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<b><i>Ahmisa</i></b>	: Non-violence
<b><i>Ashram</i></b>	: Home for community living
<b><i>Bapu</i></b>	: Father, name often given to Mahatma Gandhi by his followers
<b><i>Charkha</i></b>	: Spinning- wheel
<b><i>Dal</i></b>	: Association
<b><i>Dharna</i></b>	: A sit-down strike
<b><i>Firangi</i></b>	: A term used for the British
<b><i>Ghat</i></b>	: Bank of a river
<b><i>Goonda</i></b>	: Hooligan
<b><i>Guru</i></b>	: Teacher
<b><i>Harijian</i></b>	: A name which Gandhiji gave to in untouchables
<b><i>Hartal</i></b>	: Stoppage of work business
<b><i>Himsa</i></b>	: violence
<b><i>Inquilab</i></b>	: Revolution
<b><i>Islam</i></b>	: Mohammdanism
<b><i>Istri</i></b>	: Woman
<b><i>Jai</i></b>	: Victory
<b><i>Jalsa</i></b>	: A public meeting
<b><i>Jalus</i></b>	: A public procession
<b><i>Jatha</i></b>	: Numerous
<b><i>Karmayogi</i></b>	: Practical worker
<b><i>Khadi, Khaddar</i></b>	: Hand-spun and hand-woven cloth
<b><i>Khaki</i></b>	: Brown
<b><i>Khilifat</i></b>	: Caliph, head of the Muslim community
<b><i>Khitafat</i></b>	: The line of succession of prophet Muhammad
<b><i>Kisan</i></b>	: A peasant

<i>Lakh</i>	: 1,00,000
<i>Lathi</i>	: Stick
<i>Mahila</i>	: A woman
<i>Mahatma</i>	: A high-souled person
<i>Mohalla</i>	: Street
<i>Murdabad</i>	: Down with
<i>Nari</i>	: Woman
<i>Panchayat</i>	: A village council of five or more elders
<i>Prabhat pheri</i>	: An early morning procession
<i>Purna</i>	: Full
<i>Pyjama</i>	: Trousers
<i>Raj</i>	: Kingdom; commonly used for British rule in India
<i>Ryot</i>	: A peasant
<i>Sabha</i>	: A meeting or an assembly
<i>Samadhi</i>	: Grave
<i>Samaj</i>	: An association
<i>Samiti</i>	: An association
<i>Sari</i>	: A long piece of cloth worn by Indian women
<i>Satya</i>	: Truth
<i>Saryagraha</i>	: Civil or non-violent resistance
<i>Swaraj</i>	: Self-government
<i>Takli</i>	: Twirligig used for spinning cotton or wool
<i>Taluka</i>	: Revenue division
<i>Thana</i>	: Police station
<i>Tola</i>	: One of the smallest Indian denomination in weight
<i>Vakil</i>	: A Lawyer
<i>Yuvak</i>	: Young
<i>Zamindar</i>	: Landlord
<i>Zamindari</i>	: Landlordism
<i>Zindabad</i>	: a word used for victory long live
<i>Zulum</i>	: Oppression

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